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November 17 - 23, 2021

CityPULSE

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A newspaper for
the rest of us

Top of the Town: All-Stars Edition

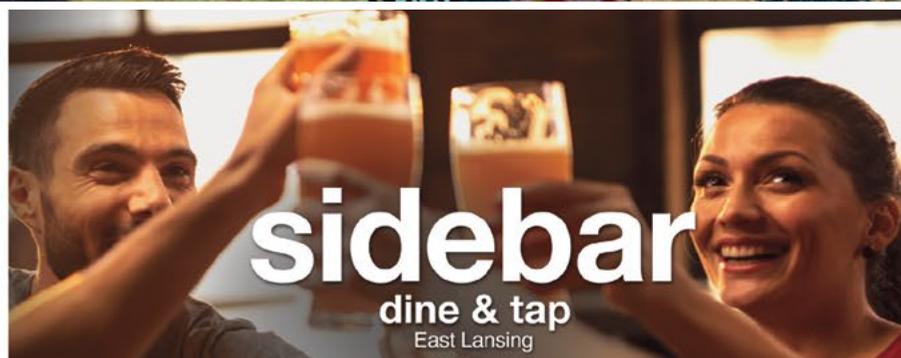
The people, places and things that
moved Greater Lansing in 2021

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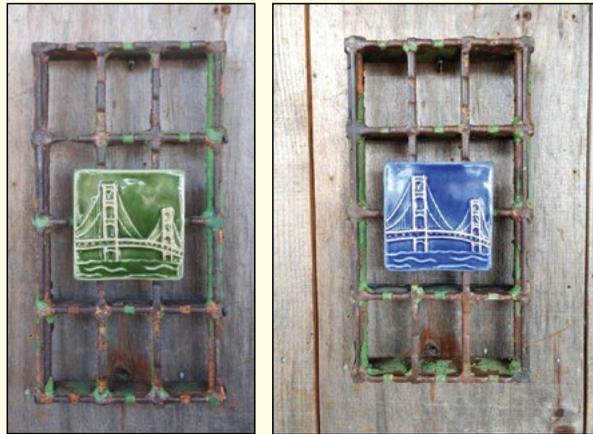


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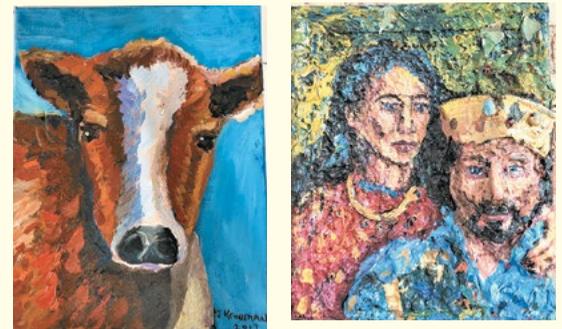
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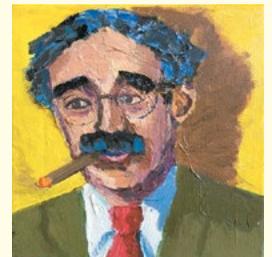
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Watercolor cats by Haslett artist Richard O'Malley.



Acrylic and Mixed Media paintings by Okemos artist John Kroneman.



Miniature Acrylic on Board paintings by Bloomfield Pat Langner.

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About this week's cover art:

"I am Lansing" — the artwork featured on this week's cover — is a creation of Steph Joy Hogan, Lansing's best artist, as declared by voters in the City Pulse-Fox News 47 Top of the Town contest. For more information about the artist and this particular piece of art, visit stephjoyhogan.com/iamlansing.



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Riverfront Animal Hospital closes its doors after 30 years



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Learn about new products from Lansing's best budtender



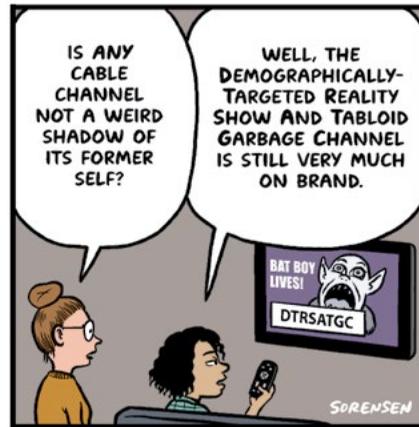
PAGE 30

Find out about Lansing's best new restaurants



Cover Art

Illustration by Steph Joy Hogan



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THIS MODERN WORLD

LET'S GET MAD ABOUT SOMETHING DUMB

THE REPUBLICAN PATH TO VICTORY IN 2022 AND BEYOND

WE COULD RUN ON OUR POPULAR POLICIES!

HA HA! YOU ARE SUCH A KIDDER!

OBVIOUSLY MASK AND VACCINE MANDATES ARE A CONSTANT SOURCE OF UMBRAGE.

JOE BIDEN WANTS TO FORCE YOU TO TAKE COMMON SENSE PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES IN THE FACE OF A STUBBORN PANDEMIC!

IT'S EXACTLY LIKE NAZI GERMANY! WHERE THE S.S. FAMOUSLY WENT DOOR TO DOOR TRYING TO VACCINATE THE JEWS!

AND THERE'S ALWAYS SOME NEW TWIST TO GET THE RUBES--ER, THE VOTERS--WORKED UP ABOUT!

BIG BIRD IS A VACCINE PROPAGANDIST! AS A VERY SERIOUS UNITED STATES SENATOR, IT IS MY SOLEMN DUTY TO DENOUNCE THE LARGE YELLOW BIRD PUPPET FROM THE BELOVED CHILDREN'S PROGRAM!

ALSO, "LET'S GO BRANDON"! HEH, HEH.

MEANWHILE, JOSH HAWLEY IS RE-VISITING THE MORAL PANICS OF DAYS GONE BY!

YOUNG MEN ARE SPENDING FAR TOO MUCH TIME PLAYING VIDEO-GAMES AND WATCHING PORN--AND IT'S SAPPING THEIR MASCULINITY!

NOT TO MENTION THEIR PRECIOUS BODILY FLUIDS!

AND OF COURSE, WE CAN'T FORGET THE CURRENT CRI DE COEUR OF RIGHT WING RESENTMENT!

THE REAL PROBLEM WITH THIS COUNTRY IS ALL THE CRITICAL RACE THEORY EVERYWHERE!

I GET MAD JUST THINKING ABOUT THOSE THREE WORDS, WHICH ARE PRETTY MUCH ALL I KNOW ABOUT THE TOPIC!

LET'S GO DISRUPT A SCHOOL BOARD MEETING-- FOR FREEDOM!

SO STAY OUTRAGED, PATRIOTS! THE G.O.P. IS COUNTING ON YOU!

I'M FURIOUS ABOUT THIS YEAR'S SO-CALLED "HOLIDAY" CUPS AT STARBUCKS!

THERE'S A GAY COUPLE IN THE NEW SUPERHERO MOVIE AND I AM LIVID!

I'M MAD THERE AREN'T MORE THINGS TO BE MAD ABOUT! I JUST LIKE BEING MAD!

Tom Tomorrow © 2021...www.thismodernworld.com...twitter.com/tomtomorrow

PULSE

NEWS & OPINION

Schor bucks Health Department over City Hall mask mandate

Mayor lifts requirement as COVID-19 cases surge

Despite a substantial spike in COVID-19 cases across Greater Lansing and against the advice of leading health officials, newly reelected Mayor Andy Schor has lifted a universal mask mandate at City Hall — even while local hospitals are nearly full.

Last Thursday, both McLaren and Sparrow hospitals were reportedly at or close to 100% capacity while the COVID-19 virus embarked on a substantial pre-winter surge in Lansing. On Friday, a citywide memorandum — a direct result of a mayoral directive from Schor — went out to all city employees: “Vaccinated individuals are no longer required to wear a mask,” it read.

The memo didn’t include any explanation for the change in masking protocols for vaccinated staff, which effectively reversed a universal mask mandate issued by Schor’s administration in August. It also noted that daily health screenings for employees would be suspended until further notice beginning this week. Temperatures are also no longer being checked at the lobby.

One key problem: Guidelines published by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and the Ingham County Health Department all recommend masks be worn.

And now Schor is facing criticism for reversing a policy that was designed to protect the public.

“I would recommend exactly what the CDC recommends — and that’s masking indoors in public places for both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals in areas determined to have a high risk of transmission,” Ingham County Health Officer Linda Vail told City Pulse on Tuesday. “And that’s here. If there was a level of transmission beyond high, we are just about there right now.”

Every county in Michigan (and across most of the Midwest) was still ranked in the CDC’s “high risk” category for coronavirus transmission this



Kyle Kaminski/City Pulse

A sign requiring masks at City Hall was still posted on a door there Tuesday after Mayor Andy Schor reversed the policy Friday.

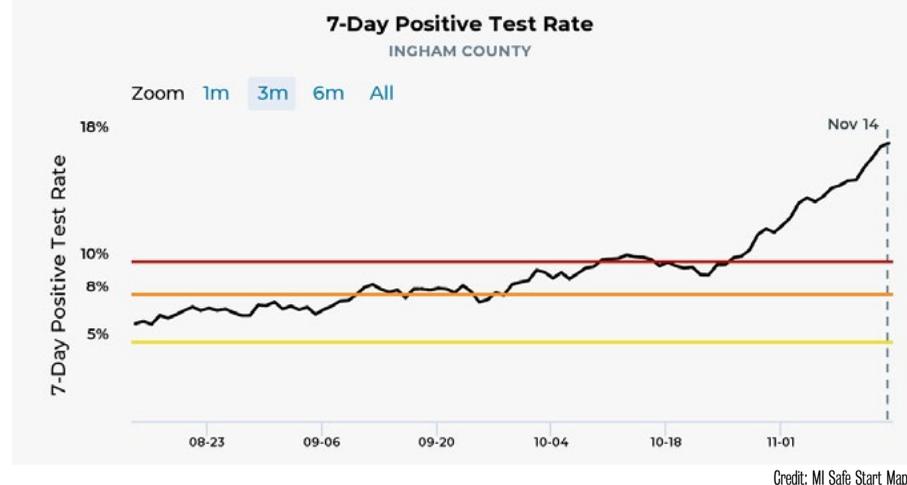
week — which specifically comes along with guidance to implement indoor mask mandates in public.

In Ingham County, that spike was evidenced by 1,023 COVID-19 cases and 10 related deaths tracked in the last week, according to recent state data. Vail said that the county’s hospitals were still “nearing capacity” this week with 142 hospitalized COVID-19 patients hospitalized.

“As a community leader, we have an obligation to follow public health recommendations,” Vail said. “I just don’t understand the logic here: Why would you put a mask requirement in place in August and then take it away now? We’re seeing this giant upward surge, which will invariably put stress on our health system. That’s a key reason why we should keep precautions in place.”

A spokesman for Schor’s office didn’t offer much of an explanation for what motivated the shift, except to point out that CDC guidelines only “recommend” rather than “require” masks be worn. He said he was unable to offer more background on the decision at this time.

The spokesman said that city offi-



Credit: MI Safe Start Map

cials looked at what other communities in Greater Lansing are doing about masks before reversing the mandate.

Masks are optional at the State Capitol as well as municipal offices in Dimondale, Dewitt, Grand Ledge, Mason, Delhi Charter Township and Lansing Charter Township, while universal masking mandates are in place in Meridian Township, East Lansing and the court buildings in Mason.

Vail said nobody in Schor’s administration consulted the Health Department prior to enacting the change.

She added: “All workplaces are public places. It’s not your home, so that’s a public place. I’m seeing people wear masks at fast food restaurants. Even McDonald’s has a mask policy. The bottom line here is that the CDC recommends that you mask while indoors and it also encourages our community leaders to make sure that they are the ones leading that charge.”

On Sunday, Lansing City Council President Peter Spadafore followed Schor’s lead and lifted requirements that face masks be worn at Council meetings. But after a conversation with Vail later that afternoon, he reversed course on Monday and reimplemented the mask mandate.

“I made a premature decision and that was a mistake,” Spadafore explained to City Pulse. “In accordance with CDC recommendations, it’s still important that everyone in public spaces wear masks as part of a layered prevention strategy. Now is just not the time to let down our guard.”

Spadafore can only dictate policies on the 10th Floor of City Hall, which includes the Council chambers and its adjoining committee rooms and offices. Masks are still optional for vaccinated visitors across the rest of the building, including the 54A District Court and the Clerk’s Office.

“For the last 19 months, there have been inconsistent policies everywhere, a patchwork of different regulations,” Spadafore added. “But I do think it’s important to consider CDC recommendations and implement them with as much fidelity as possible. I felt compelled to do anything that I could to make sure everyone felt safe. This is about protecting our neighbors.”

Although Schor has no immediate plans to again require face masks at City Hall, a spokesman for his office emphasized that his department directors still have the discretion to require they be worn. He also emphasized that masks are still required for anyone who has not been vaccinated for COVID-19, though employees and visitors will not be asked to provide proof of vaccinations.

Schor told this reporter last week that he had been itching to get rid of the mask mandate at City Hall for weeks. He has also said that he has no plans to require vaccinations for city staff. A federal mandate that would require those shots at all large businesses — including the city — remains in legal limbo after it was temporarily halted by the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

See Masks, Page 7

Riverfront Animal Hospital closing after three decades

‘Dr. Lisa’ can’t even guess how many patients she’s seen

For 14 years, Tamara Hicks-Syron’s beagle Elvis had been at her side as a constant companion, source of comfort and entertainment. But this summer, he became very sick while she was in Calhoun County. She bundled up Elvis and rushed him to Lansing to see his doctor at Riverfront Animal Hospital: Dr. Lisa Hassinger. Her human clients know her as Dr. Lisa.

Hicks-Syron watched while Hassinger completed the exam. A choice needed to be made: She could drive a few miles east to Michigan State University’s clinic and spend a small fortune for testing and a full diagnosis — which would be unlikely to increase Elvis’ quantity or quality of life. Or, Hicks-Syron could make the decision to let her beloved beagle go while in her arms.

“I looked at Dr. Lisa and I asked her, ‘If he was yours, what would you do?’” Hicks-Syron explained, her voice cracking with emotion. “She looked at me and said, ‘I would let him go.’”

As Hassinger, 63, prepared for the procedure, Hicks-Syron comforted her friend while Hassinger, 63, prepared for the procedure. She mentioned to Hassinger how much she loved the beagle’s ears. Even with Elvis’ old age, they stayed soft and fluffy. Hassinger then turned around, grabbed a small index card-sized frame, clipped some of Elvis’ ear hair off and placed it in the frame.

She handed it to Hicks-Syron.

Hicks-Syron had been bringing her pet beagles, and other rescues that had wandered into her life, to Hassinger’s Riverfront Animal Hospital clinic for “at least two decades.” She referred to Hassinger as the “Beagle Whisperer.” Beagles can be strong willed and difficult to deal with for pet owners who don’t know the breed; and the same is true for the vets who take care of them.

But Hassinger, after 37 years as a licensed veterinarian in Michigan, said she plans to call it quits in December on a fulfilling lifelong career. She spent her first seven years working as a vet at her current location on Larch Street before deciding to purchase the practice 30 years ago.

Exactly when walk-in services will stop is unclear — maybe Dec. 8 or Dec. 14, Hassinger said.

The decision to retire was one that became crystal clear on July 5. After more than a year of COVID-19 protocols, including an outbreak linked to her clinic, she began struggling to find staff. And it was a “tingle” felt while she was running mundane errands that clinched it.

“It was the Monday after the Fourth of July and most businesses had that Monday off,” she said, noting that she too had closed her clinic for the holiday. “I was driving around and I just realized, ‘Oh, so this is what this is like — not having to be anywhere.’”

For decades, Hassinger’s schedule had been dictated by family and clinic



Skylar Ashley/City Pulse

Reporter Todd Heywood’s dog Gaveston receives a shot from Dr. Lisa Hassinger.

obligations. She raised two daughters — one is a traveling emergency room nurse, the other a special needs child who lives at home. She divorced and remarried during that time. She would always arrive at the clinic by 9 a.m. and often not leave until 7 p.m. or later.

What does she plan to do with her new free time?

“Live life,” she said with a laugh. “Do some work around the house, garden. Just live.”

Hassinger’s journey to become a vet started at the same location where she’s closing out her career. While attending Lansing Community College, she said she stopped at the clinic and asked if they would allow her to shadow the vet. Instead, they offered her a job on the spot.

She cleaned kennels and helped with office work while she studied as a college student.

But her path was not always certain to end with being a veterinarian. At 20, her father died unexpectedly and she received a rejection letter from the MSU’s School of Veterinary Medicine. Rejection for a first-time appli-

cant to vet schools is not uncommon. But Hassinger was crushed.

She considered becoming a lower-tier position as a veterinary technician. Hassinger’s friends and family, however, encouraged her to apply again. She did, and was finally admitted.

This month, she’s spending evenings and weekends handwriting the medical files for every pet in her practice to help transition the animals to new doctors. She’s doing that because her clinic is a no-frills place — no computer, no blood analyzer. Records for each animal are kept on cards, with procedures, immunizations and diagnoses inscribed by hand. It’s part of the reason that she has been able to reduce the costs of pet care for her client. And it fits her philosophy.

“I don’t want to run a bunch of tests because I need to pay certain bills,” Hassinger said. “I want my clients to understand if I tell you a procedure is needed, it’s because it is needed.”

That philosophy has given her a following of thousands of clients over the years — a lifetime number so high that she couldn’t even provide an estimate when asked to ballpark it last week.

While writing out those medical records and transferring clients to new clinics and doctors, she’s also considering what to do with the practice itself and its building. She said she is exploring several options, including selling the practice to another vet or donating it to a charity.

At the end of the year, however, whatever happens with the practice, she’ll be done with her career — and facing whatever else comes along with her parting mantra: “It is what it is.”

— TODD HEYWOOD

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING EAST LANSING HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Notice is hereby given of the following public hearing to be held by the East Lansing Historic District Commission on **Thursday, December 9, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.**, at the 54-B District Court, Courtroom 2, 101 Linden Street, East Lansing, Michigan 48823:

A public hearing will be held to consider a request from Joel Nephew for the property at 520 Ann Street to expand a shed in the rear yard and replace two doors on the home.

For more information on the request please contact Historic Preservation Officer Raphael Kasen at (517) 319-6828 or rkasen@cityofeastlansing.com. Materials related to the request are available for viewing at the Department of Planning, Building, and Development, East Lansing City Hall, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI, 48823 between the hours of 8:00 am and 5:00 pm or on the City’s website located at www.cityofeastlansing.com/currentapplications. Written comments may be sent prior to the public hearing to the Historic District Commission, City of East Lansing, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, Michigan, 48823, or by email to coelhistoricdistricts@cityofeastlansing.com.

The City of East Lansing will provide reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as interpreters for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting, to individuals with disabilities upon request received by the City seven (7) calendar days prior to the meeting. Individuals with disabilities requiring aids or services must contact the City Manager’s Office, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI, 48823, (517) 319-6920 (TDD Number: 1-800-649-3777) or via email at nmostel@cityofeastlansing.com.

This notice is posted in compliance with PA 267 of 1976 as amended (Open Meetings Act) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and published in compliance with the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, 2006 P.A. 110.

Jennifer Shuster
City Clerk

CP#21-253

STATE OF MICHIGAN PROBATE COURT INGHAM COUNTY NOTICE TO CREDITORS DECEDENT’S ESTATE CASE NO. 19-462-DE

Estate of ROBIN ANN VELASQUEZ. Date of birth: 04/06/55.

TO ALL CREDITORS: NOTICE TO CREDITORS:

The decedent, Robin Ann Velasquez, died 01/09/2019. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Reymundo Velasquez, personal representative or to both the probate court at 313 W. Kalamazoo St., Lansing, MI 48933 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

11/17/2021
Reymundo Velasquez
PO Box 14005
Lansing, MI 48901
517-512-2921

CP#21-252

REWIND

NEWS HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LAST 7 DAYS



By KYLE KAMINSKI

Sparrow nurses vote on strike

About 2,200 members of the Professional Employee Council of Sparrow Hospital in Lansing are slated to vote this week on whether to organize a strike, possibly as early as next month amid concerns over understaffing and a lack of wage increases. Voting on the strike began Tuesday and ends Sunday. Visit lansingcitypulse.com for more coverage.

Lansing searches for poet laureate

Those interested in promoting poetry as an art form and expanding access to the literary arts in Greater Lansing are encouraged to apply to be Lansing's next poet laureate — a two-year program that offers a poet a \$4,000 stipend to showcase poetry as a literary voice in Lansing. Applications are due back Feb. 7. Visit purelansing.com/poetlaureate for details.

Schor hires new comms director

Longtime public relations professional Scott Bean was hired to replace Valerie Marchand as Lansing Mayor Andy Schor's communication director. Bean has worked at Grassroots Midwest, as well as in the Senate for 12 years — including as chief of staff for two Republican senators. Marchand was last paid an \$85,000 annual salary. Bean will earn an annual salary of \$70,000.

Church group gives away turkeys

Need a Thanksgiving dinner this year? Larry Mitchel Trice Sr. Community Outreach Services is planning to give away 500 boxed turkey dinners beginning at 6 p.m. Monday (Nov. 22) at the LMTC Center, 1122 W. Holmes Road, in Suite #3 of Logan Square next to the U-Haul facility.

Lansing loses public relations leg-end

Kelly Rossman-McKinney, a one-woman institution in Lansing's public relations scene, died at 67 last week following a battle with bladder cancer. Rossman-McKinney helped lead the Lansing-based public relations firm of Truscott Rossman and, most recently, worked as the communications director for Attorney General Dana Nessel.

East Lansing elects first Black mayor

The East Lansing City Council selected newly elected Councilman Ron Bacon as mayor — making local history as the first Black person to serve as the city's mayor. Bacon and newly elected Councilwoman Dana Watson are also the first



Kyle Kaminski/City Pulse

Nurses picket Sparrow Hospital on Nov. 3.

two Black people to be elected by voters to the City Council. New Councilman George Brookover was also sworn in for a four-year term.

WLNZ relaunches as Michigan Radio

Lansing Community College's 89.7 FM, WLNZ radio station is now under the management of Michigan Radio, which will also provide public radio programming beginning this week. Those tuning into 89.7 will hear familiar national shows such as "Marketplace," "BBC Newshour" and Michigan Radio's flagship, award-winning program "Stateside." Locally produced programming will still be aired weekly on Saturday afternoons and Sunday evenings.

Teenage boy charged in homicide

A 13-year-old boy has been charged in the homicide of 18-year-old Noah Sisung, whom police said was shot and killed in late October and later found behind the wheel of a pickup truck that crashed into a tree along South Pennsylvania Avenue. Authorities said the boy remains at a juvenile detention facility and will face felony charges of open murder and carrying a concealed weapon.

Police investigate deadly crash

Lansing cops are looking for the driver of a light-colored Chevy S-10 or GMC Sonoma with damage to the front passenger side who reportedly struck and killed a 13-year-old boy walking along the side of West Jolly Road on early Sunday morning. Call tips in to police at 517-483-4600.

Pandemic shutter local schools — again

Several schools across Greater Lansing have temporarily closed their doors following a recent surge in COVID-19 cases. Pottsville Public Schools reportedly shifted to remote learning through Tuesday. Charlotte Upper Elementary School also made a move to remote learning and Stockbridge Community Schools closed on Friday due to widespread staffing shortages.

Commission blocks recall petition for Betz

Republican operative Undra Brown plans to head back to the drawing board this week after the Ingham County Election Commission shot down his plans on Monday to circulate a recall petition against Lansing City Councilman Brandon Betz. Read more at lansingcitypulse.com.

Judge takes action at southside apartments

54-A District Court Judge Cynthia Ward ordered Rivershell Apartments on Bayview Drive to board up the balconies and sliding glass doors across more than 100 of its units following concerns from city of Lansing officials over a lack of routine maintenance, unsafe living conditions and a lack of valid rental certificates. Read more at lansingcitypulse.com.

Masks

from page 5

Current CDC guidance, however, still calls for those 2 or older who are not fully vaccinated to wear masks in indoor public spaces. It also notes that masks should be required even of fully vaccinated people in public spaces located in regions of "substantial" or "high" transmission.

In Ingham County, masks are legally required in educational facilities like schools and daycares, as well as when riding public transportation like

on Capital Area Transportation Authority buses. Elsewhere, they're only "recommended," though Vail expects that advice to be taken seriously.

She said a strict county order would be unenforceable and untenable for many residents, leaving her to rely on employers and elected leaders to set an example for the local community.

"There's no way to enforce it," she explained. "We've been living in this COVID-19 situation for two years. People don't need to be — and shouldn't be — ordered to know the right thing to do."

— KYLE KAMINSKI



Pruss Pets

1127 N. Cedar St., Lansing

It's been a banner year for Pruss Pets in Old Town and its owner Rick Pruss. In August, the World Pet Association honored him and the store for a lifetime of advancing the pet industry with the title of retailer of the year. Pruss himself was also honored with a lifetime achievement award. And last week, Top of the Town voters declared the shop as the best Eye Candy in town.

A former car dealership, the brightly painted pet store edifice includes a towering waterfall display and a rainforest facade painted on the outside wall, a mural from a local artist.

"Eye Candy of the Week" is our look at some of the nicer properties in Lansing. It rotates with Eyesore of the Week and Eye for Design. If you have a suggestion, please e-mail eye@lansingcitypulse.com or call Berl Schwartz at 999-5061.



Garno Property Management 1500 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing

Top of the Town voters have repeatedly selected former President Donald Trump as the nation's worst politician. So, it should come as no surprise that one of his biggest cheerleaders in the Capital City would have his building named as the worst Eye Sore in the Greater Lansing region.

That's right: By a landslide, the Garno Property Management building, on the eastside, was picked as Lansing's least visually attractive building in town for the second year in a row.

Though much of the Trump signage has disappeared, there's still a bevy of "Make Lansing Great Again" signage and other conservative-themed banners. And in Lansing's east side, that brand of politics appears to have struck a real nerve.

"Eyesore of the Week" is our look at some of the seadier properties in Lansing. It rotates with Eye Candy of the Week and Eye for Design. Have a suggestion? Email eye@lansingcitypulse.com or call it in at 517-999-6715.

'No evidence' recent policy shifts will boost crime

By **CAROL SIEMON**

(This is a response from Ingham County Prosecutor Carol Siemon to an essay that was published in City Pulse last week from the board of directors at Crimestoppers of Mid-Michigan.)

As the prosecutor, I have worked — with the support and mandate of the voters — throughout my two terms on the consistent and intertwined issues of public safety, supporting victims, racial equity, smart reforms to the criminal legal system and reducing mass incarceration.

In this time of growing violence

nationally and locally, it may feel counterintuitive to continue efforts to make the system more equitable. Yet, increased homicides and other violence occur in communities that have both maintained the "law and order" status quo, like Ingham County until very recently,



Siemon

and in communities where reforms have been enacted.

There has been pressure to maintain the most punitive legal tools in the misguided but sincere effort to stem the violence. It's a common refrain that we can't afford criminal justice reform at times of rising violence. But a more comprehensive view shows that this is a time when moving backwards would recreate the racially biased mass incarceration results that we have been striving to eliminate — inequities that do nothing to actually make the public safer.

And while there are loud assertions that reforms, including the ones I

have made, lead to an increase in crime, there is absolutely no evidence provided to support those assertions.

The question for police, prosecutors and policymakers is not only how can we solve the most recent crime in our neighborhoods, but also how can we create public safety in a just and equitable framework.

Reforming the application of felony firearm laws is part of this overall framework, as is changing how we handle the many cases that originate from police nonpublic safety traffic stops.

Ignored in the policy backlash is the fact that nationally hundreds of Black and brown people have been injured and killed arising out of the kind of

See Siemon, Page 9

Drawing the line on gerrymandering

Once every 10 years, following the decennial census, the boundaries that define legislative districts for the Michigan Legislature and Congress are redrawn to reflect changes in population, with the goal of ensuring that each district more or less contains the same number of people. One might expect this process to be a simple exercise in mathematics and map drawing. In reality, it's anything but simple and more often than not, rife with political maneuvering that seeks to gain an electoral advantage for one political party or the other.

The usual tactic for creating a partisan advantage through redistricting is known as gerrymandering. Whereas legislative district boundaries are generally supposed to follow existing jurisdictional lines — the borders of a county or city, for example — gerrymandering seeks to create districts that intentionally contain a majority of Republican or Democratic voters. The result has been some truly bizarre districts that snake across multiple communities in an effort to capture pockets of party supporters and assemble them into a single voting district.

Putting an end to partisan gerrymandering was the principal driver behind a successful grassroots campaign in 2018 to change Michigan's redistricting process through a statewide ballot proposal. As a result, this year's process is being led by a non-partisan commission made up of ordinary citizens instead of politicians with a vested interest in tilting the district

maps toward their party. The commission has labored for months to gather public input on how the new maps should be drawn. Their analysis has centered on terms like "communities of interest" that seek to keep like groups of people together in a single district so they have a stronger chance of electing one of their own to represent them in Lansing or Washington.

The commission has had a somewhat bumpy ride thus far, having missed the constitutional deadline for creating new district maps, then catching flak for hiring a law firm with a track record of helping Republicans gerrymander legislative districts. Some observers think the process has been a disaster, while others are taking a wait-and-see posture before judging the success or failure of the effort.

Here in Greater Lansing, it appears that the process will result in significant changes in our legislative district boundaries. Where Lansing and East Lansing have been in the same state Senate district for as long as we can remember, going forward they most likely will be split apart, with Lansing in one district and East Lansing in another.

What does this mean in practical terms? For starters, it means that the region's current state senator, Curtis Hertel, who is term-limited and will

serve his final year in office next year, is likely to be replaced not by one new senator, but by two. A highly anticipated campaign showdown between current and former state representa-

tives Sarah Anthony and Sam Singh likely won't happen after all. Instead, each will be

able to run in a new Senate district and both will have a better-than-average chance to win. For fans of both politicians, it's a relief that voters won't have to choose between them in the next election.

At one level, this is a positive outcome for the region — effectively doubling Greater Lansing's voice in the Michigan Senate and ensuring that both seats will be held by Democrats. It may also increase the likelihood that the Legislature's upper chamber will flip from Republican to Democratic control after the 2022 election. It's been a long time coming: Republicans have held the Senate majority for the past 40 years, at least in part due to aggressive partisan gerrymandering.

At another level, separating Lansing and East Lansing is mildly disconcerting, in the sense that it creates a new division between the East Lansing/Meridian Township political axis, dominated by more affluent white people, and the urban core of Lansing with its significant communities of color and much higher proportion of people living in poverty. On the one hand,

this could be viewed as keeping communities of interest together in each district. On the other, we hope it's not a harbinger of conflict, where the disparate interests of the two cities create a new political wedge that thwarts rather than encourages regional cooperation that benefits the Greater Lansing region as a whole.

Another effect of the redistricting process is that it can kick off a round of legislative musical chairs, where incumbent elected officials are boot-ed from their long-held districts and thrown into new ones, sometimes pitting them against political allies for the right to represent a newly constituted legislative district. Even Elissa Slotkin, Lansing's congressional representative, may be forced to buy a new home in her redesigned congressional district to remain eligible to represent the Lansing area.

It remains to be seen if the end result of the citizen-driven redistricting process will be an improvement over the partisan-led efforts of the past. From our standpoint, if the new boundary maps create more Democratic-leaning districts that help break the Republicans' interminable stranglehold over the Michigan Senate, we'll consider it an unqualified success. Some might say we're arguing for another form of gerrymandering that benefits Democrats over Republicans. We call it correcting the injustices of past gerrymandering that unfairly tilted the electoral playing field and gave Republicans an undeserved advantage.

The CP Edit

Opinion

A Slotkin-Barrett race in '22? It's shaping up — as a doozy

It looks like D.C. Republicans and state Sen. Tom Barrett, R-Charlotte, have found the perfect match in each other.

The House R's wanted a proven vote-getter in a brand new congressional district that incumbent U.S. Rep. Elissa Slotkin has never run in before.

Barrett was looking for somewhere to run. The independent redistricting commission is one perfunctory vote away from drawing Barrett out of his current state Senate District in 2022, so he's moving on to a bigger stage.

It's one he could win.

Clinton, Eaton, Shiawassee and rural Ingham voters overwhelmingly picked Barrett for the Senate in 2018.

Unless a judge does something odd, all of that area is being roped into a brand new mid-Michigan congressional district the map makers drew in with Ingham and Livingston counties.

Barrett is the perfect fit here. His 20-some years flying choppers just about everywhere the USA military has fought in the last 10 years will be brought up a time or two.

He knows the district. He's campaigned the district. He has a young family. He's against "forced vaccinations." He had COVID. He only knows it because the military required the test.

He's super conservative. He's kept his powder dry on Trump's "rigged election" claims, but he still sponsored some election changes the governor vetoed.

I can't imagine another Republican even thinking about getting into the race against Barrett. Why bother?

Trump isn't getting involved unless it's for Barrett.

Meanwhile, the Constitution doesn't require Slotkin, a Holly resident, to move to the area to run here, but she's going to do it anyway.

The Oakland County portion of her district is getting stuck with Dan Kildee's Flint district or something VERY Republican.

It would have Macomb County, the Thumb and other GOP-heavy territory in it.

Slotkin told me last week she feels it's important that someone who represents a district in Congress live in that district.

In short, Slotkin is looking for property in the area. She'll be moving her permanent residence away from the

family's Holly farm soon.

So, the table is about set. Slotkin. Barrett.

It's former CIA versus recently retired Army helicopter pilot in what I'm guessing will be as competitive and likely as expensive a race we've seen since Bishop-Slotkin in 2018.

That's not hyperbole.

Again, unless the court says this new redistricting panel messed up, we will be voting on a congressional district next year made up of some configuration of Clinton, Eaton, Ingham, Livingston and Shiawassee counties.

A little Ionia or Barry could get mixed in there, but this is basically it.

If you add up the total votes for only the major party congressional candidates in all five counties from 2020, the Democrat gets 51% and the Republican gets 49%.

Add in the likely Republican lean of whatever rural pieces are left and this is shaping up to be as 50/50 as you're going to get.

I understand Jerry Hilliard — the Dem in Clinton County — isn't Slotkin. And Tom Barrett probably won't be left to fend for himself like Paul Junge was in '20.

All and all, it's shaping up to be one hell of a race.

It'll likely be an expensive one, too. Bishop-Slotkin in 2018 was the state's most expensive congressional race ever at \$28.3 million between both candidates, their PACs and assorted third-party supporters.

Slotkin has been raising U.S. Senate-like numbers for a couple of years now. She's got around \$5 million banked.

Barrett was in a \$2.64 million Senate race with the late Kelly Rossman-McKinney in 2018, so he's shown he can raise money too.

The only reason this race won't eclipse \$28 million is if the parties don't see the point in dumping money into the Detroit media market to touch what pieces of Livingston County rely on the Detroit networks.

Otherwise, in Lansing, TV and radio should be saturated with heavy advertising.

Suffice to say if this column is your first introduction to a Barrett-Slotkin race, it most certainly won't be the last.

(Email Kyle Melinn of the Capitol news service MIRS at melinnky@gmail.com.)



OPINION

Siemon

from page 8

police contacts I seek to reduce. This is a public safety issue as well that often gets lost in the fear-based outcry.

The felony firearm supplemental enhancement leads to fundamentally unequal outcomes in how it has been applied since its enactment — when over 80% of those incarcerated for the felony firearm charge are Black in a state with a 14% Black population.

Rather than continuing to charge each and every case, we are taking a closer look at how we can best utilize this tool — and to focus on the actual behaviors by prosecuting the underlying charge rather than simply add two years of minimum mandatory prison time to every case. The felony firearm charge has never lived up to its promise of making the public safer, and so we are working to prioritize the cases where there is a clear public safety threat and a need for prison sentencing to protect the public.

I believe that public safety is best

achieved by focusing data-driven policy and prosecution resources on instances where we most effectively address the actual violence. Police efforts can be focused on cold case homicide investigation and additional resources for a focused deterrence process rather than wastefully using resources that target Black and brown drivers for non-public safety traffic stops.

We all agree that gun and other violence is deeply concerning and needs to be addressed. As a longtime prosecutor who works with prosecutors and law enforcement across the nation to develop data-driven solutions to getting America's deadly gun culture under control, I am proud to be part of a multifaceted approach to solve our national gun violence crisis.

Certificate of Assumed Name:
Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 333;
ASSUMED NAME: SHAWN
MICHAEL WILLIAMS;
registered at the Office of
Minnesota Secretary of State;
Work Item 1262868900034;
Original File Number:
1262868900034;
Filed 10/18/2021 11:59 P.M.
Nameholder: Williams, Shawn
Michael; CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OFFICER
Active/In Good Standing.
CP#21-246

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS EAST LANSING PLANNING COMMISSION

Notice is hereby given of the following public hearings to be held by the East Lansing Planning Commission on **Wednesday, December 8, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. at the East Lansing Hannah Community Center, 819 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI, 48823.**

1. Request from J.J. Investment Properties, LLC to renovate the existing 3-story building at 251 W. Grand River Avenue from an office on the first floor and Class A multiple-family dwellings units on the upper floors to a Class B multiple-family dwelling for use as a fraternity with occupancy for 45 residents. The property is zoned B-1 (General Office Business District).
2. Request from Delta Psi Alumni Housing Corporation to use the Class B multiple-family dwelling at 532 Ann Street for a fraternity with occupancy for no more than 15 residents. The property is zoned RM-32 (City Center Residential District).

The public may attend and participate at all meetings in person. Members of the public may participate electronically in all meetings. Please contact the Planning and Zoning Administrator or visit the City's public meeting portal for electronic meeting access information:

Peter Menser – Planning and Zoning Administrator
410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI 48823
517.319.6861 or pmenser@cityofeastlansing.com
<https://cityofeastlansing.civicweb.net/Portal/>

For more information on the request please contact Planning and Zoning Administrator Peter Menser at the contact info above. Materials related to the request are available for viewing at the Department of Planning, Building, and Development, East Lansing City Hall, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI, 48823 between the hours of 8:00 am and 5:00 pm or on the City's website located at www.cityofeastlansing.com/currentapplications. Written comments may be sent prior to the public hearing to the Planning Commission, City of East Lansing, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, Michigan, 48823, or by email to coelplanningcommission@cityofeastlansing.com.

The City of East Lansing will provide reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as interpreters for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting, to individuals with disabilities upon request received by the City seven (7) calendar days prior to the meeting. Individuals with disabilities requiring aids or services must contact the City Manager's Office, 410 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI, 48823, (517) 319-6920 (TDD Number: 1-800-649-3777) or via email at nmostel@cityofeastlansing.com.

This notice is posted in compliance with PA 267 of 1976 as amended (Open Meetings Act) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and published in compliance with the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, 2006 P.A. 110.

Jennifer Shuster
City Clerk

CP#21-254



CityPULSE LOCAL EXPERTS

GIFTS

Made in Michigan: Stormy Kromer cap

We are proud to carry Stormy Kromer caps here at Absolute Gallery. We have new designs on our shelves for holiday gifting.

George "Stormy" Kromer, a semi-pro baseball player and railroad engineer, kept losing his hat on the train. He asked his wife, Ida, to sew an earband on his favorite ball cap to keep his ears warm and the hat snug. Thus, the original Stormy Kromer cap was born.

These hats are made in Ironwood, Mich., in the western Upper Penninsula, where winters are tough and warm headgear is essential.

The unique serial number inside each cap can be registered with the company. If the cap is lost, stolen or destroyed within three years, it can be replaced for 50% of the current price. No questions asked.

Stop by and see our selection of men's, women's and kid's caps!



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Thank you, Lansing!

We're so excited to have been voted Top of the Town! We inside the firm know about the great things we're doing (and working towards), but we'd be lying if we said we didn't crave the external validation too. So thank you!

And be sure to keep your eyes peeled for what we've got coming next. We love being top of the town, but we're aspiring to be top of the entire state as we work towards shaping a better justice system for every Michigander.

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ARTS & CULTURE

ART • BOOKS • FILM • MUSIC

'That's freedom'

Artist Timothy Orikri blows Lansing a creative kiss

By LAWRENCE COSENTINO

The chance to see your hometown through fresh, creative and loving eyes is a rare gift.

Nigerian-born artist Timothy Orikri, of Detroit, has been spending a lot of time in Lansing lately, and he's offering that gift to jaded denizens of the capital city.

The exhibit of 35 paintings at Knapp's Centre throws a familiar cityscape into a joyful confetti blender of "isms" that can only be summed up as Orikri-ism.

"I'm a mixed media artist," he said. "Take a closer look at my work and you'll find strings, burlap straw, corrugated paper, pistachio nuts, tree bark."

To create a rust-belt fantasia of the Boji Tower, Orikri spent more than 50 hours gluing macaroni, slices of cork, Mardi Gras beads, straws and clothespins onto wood. He burnished the city's tallest building in coppery light,

Timothy Orikri

'Lansing On My Mind'
Knapp's Centre
300 S. Washington Sq.,
Lansing
Saturday, Nov. 20, 11 a.m.
to 5 p.m.
Sunday, Nov. 21, 11 a.m. to
5 p.m.
Facebook.com/
TimothyOrikri.Art



Orikri has painted the iconic Eckert Plant smokestacks from four different angles.

with a bright yellow sun circling the clock at the top — a real clock, embedded in the wood.

He slices buildings and sightlines into half-moons and polygons and fills the resulting spaces with eye-popping colors and textures. Even the state Hall of Justice, a forbidding, postmodern slab of pale limestone, comes alive under his brush.

"Somebody will tell me, 'Come on, those walls don't have colors. They're white,'" he said. "Well, that's creativity. That's freedom. Sometimes cubism will work, sometimes abstraction. Sometimes I see a little Impressionism at play."

He knows his painstaking process, and prolific output, borders on obsession.

"It's gruesome, it's painful," he admitted. "I work so hard sometimes I don't know what day it is, but this is my therapy. It's cheaper to do art than go to a shrink. You ever get an overdose, you don't need a prescription and there are no side effects."

Orikri was born in Warri, a bustling big city in southern Nigeria. His parents were both teachers, and his father was a preacher. He struggled to pass his classes and ended up at age 17 in boarding school, where he met German-Nigerian artist Ufumoa Mowoe.

Impressed by Mowoe's facility with oils, pastels, life drawings and textiles, Orikri announced to his parents that he wanted to be an artist. It was not easy to get their support.

"There was a stigma that artists just suffer and waste time," he said.

When Orikri's father urged him to go into the ministry, he had a ready reply.

"I told him, 'I'll do what your doing in the pulpit with my easel and paint.'"

Orikri's latest extended sermon, "Lansing on My Mind," is equal parts inspiration and hard work.

"I wanted to generate wonder, for people to love their city, something we could embrace and celebrate," he said.

The epitome of Orikri's artistic philosophy is his Butterfly Project, a series of colorful scenes depicting butterflies he is placing in hospitals around the



A mural-sized panorama of the Lansing skyline in Timothy Orikri's home studio glitters with colorful squares in the manner of Paul Klee or Gustav Klimt.

state.

The title has a double meaning. Orikri believes his art taps into the "butterfly effect" — the idea that tiny actions can have vast, unknown consequences — and he believes it has the potential to help patients and families heal.

His artistic zeal and talent won his parents over. He worked hard as an art student at Delta State University in Nigeria and graduated in 1991. He was an art teacher "for a minute," but he was stifled by the rigid curriculum.

"I believe in experimentation," he said. "Picasso would say, 'Learn the trade, then break the rules.'"

He noticed that foreign tourists, many of them from the United States, were buying his work at airports and gift stores. At 28, he announced to his parents that he would go to America. He started out in St. Louis in 1995 and gravitated to Detroit, attracted by the openness of the city's creative scene.

"You won't be lost in Detroit," he said. "You have a feeling of belonging and it's not so expensive to live here."

The downtown Detroit Public Library has several permanent works by Orikri, including large murals. He has completed over 110 cityscapes of Detroit, and is well on his way to covering Lansing's waterfront nearly as thoroughly.

He discovered Lansing during the administration of former Gov. Rick Snyder, who lived in Ann Arbor while in office, leaving the governor's mansion in Lansing to be used as a gallery.

After bringing his art to the mansion or attending an event there, Orikri started taking self-guided tours of the capital city and liked what he saw.

Lansing's vibrant, home-grown art scene reminded him of Detroit.

"I love communities like this, cool and creative," he said.

The Knapp's exhibit began to take form when Orikri was walking down Washington Square, camera in hand, looking for ideas, and walked into Linn & Owen Jewelers, shopping for a gift.

He was sporting a colorful, Detroit-themed COVID mask that caught the eye of store owner Stewart Powell. Orikri told Powell he was an artist and would like to do a show in Lansing. Powell sent him down the street to Cathleen Edgerly, director of Downtown Lansing Inc., and Mark Clouse, general counsel for the Eyde Co., owners of the Art Deco Knapp's Centre a block away.

As Orikri's Lansing-themed works began to proliferate, he, Clouse and Edgerly masterminded the Knapp's exhibit.

"They're my diary," Orikri said. "They show what I've been doing with my brain since March."

For Orikri, the principle that drives hundreds of hours of thought, planning and hard work is simple.

"Find the beauty around you, then contribute to the creative landscape and become part of it." He plans to be at the exhibit on weekends. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., to greet visitors.

Nonprofit seeks time off for good behavior in prison

By CHELSEA PHILLIPS

Michigan Justice Advocacy is a nonprofit birthed in late-2020 after the Michigan Prisoner Rehabilitation Credit Act petition, which looked to reinstate time-off sentencing for good behavior, fell short on the amount of signatures it needed.

The organization's founders have each been impacted by incarceration and were all involved with the petition. When it failed, they continued to advocate for prisoners by starting the organization.

Michigan Justice Advocacy President Jack Wagner said he believes that the COVID-19 pandemic had a large part in the petition's failure, but he added that it has provided some benefits to the organization's operations.

"It has made meeting with lawmakers a lot easier," Wagner said.

Campaign director Richard Griffin explained that during these meetings they have been trying to "persuade, negotiate, or neutralize" lawmakers, depending on their position regarding Senate Bill 649. The bill aims to restore Michigan's "good time" credit policy, which both Wagner and Griffin argue is crucial for establishing an incentive for good behavior in prisons. Furthermore, they want this legislation to lead to reforming sentencing guidelines and parole.

Though Senate Bill 649 would ap-



ply to anyone who is incarcerated, Wagner said it doesn't help those that are sentenced to life.

"How do you deduct 30 days of credit for every 30 days served when you're serving a life term? Thirty days



This occasional feature highlights events and milestones at local nonprofits. If you would like

to submit a suggestion please email skyller@lansingcitypulse.com

Michigan Justice Advocacy

(313) 757-0503

mijustice.org

[facebook.com/MIJusticeAdvocacy](https://www.facebook.com/MIJusticeAdvocacy)

[@MIJusticeadvocacy](https://www.instagram.com/MIJusticeadvocacy)

off a life is still life."

"There's something broken if everyone can agree that a person doesn't belong in prison but we have no legal way of getting them out," Wagner said.

Wagner said legislation allowing second-look sentencing would help address this issue.

Griffin said that the bill would essentially repeal Michigan's Truth in Sentencing Act, a state law mandating offenders to serve their entire minimum sentence to be considered for parole. Wagner said that the biggest issue with this is that lawmakers "would have to admit they were wrong."

"Anybody who comes before a parole hearing knows that one of the key elements of a successful parole hearing would be that you own your past mistakes," Wagner said. "It's ironic that the state doesn't want to do the same thing."

Michigan Justice Advocacy hopes to build strong partnerships with other criminal justice reform organizations. Wagner and Griffin said that getting the bill passed is key in building these relationships with criminal justice organizations and passing future policies. Wagner also hopes that increased public awareness of Michigan's prison policies will further the nonprofit's advocacy efforts. Though no dates have been set yet, Wagner said that a status report, webinars, and town hall meetings are all in the works.

Favorite Things Allan Durham and his wireless headphones



Allan Durham is making a splash with his landscaping company, Guy With a Mullet Landscaping. It won Best Landscaping Company in this year's Top of the Town Contest. Durham loves music's ability to get him through his day, and its power to make work fun.

It started with my weight loss journey. I was 260 pounds. I was still living in California. I was using a pair of wired headphones that were super long, they were like a pair of audio recording headphones. So, I had an obnoxiously long wire that I would wrap around the front of the treadmill. I did it so many times that I ruined the wire, so I needed a pair of wireless headphones.

They really changed my world. I use the same headphones that I bought out there when I lost a hundred pounds to do all of my yard work. They offer protection when I'm out mowing. I've got a bunch of different things I listen to, no matter what I'm doing.

Whenever I'm mowing, I like to listen to softer country stuff. I'll be listening to Luke Combs, Morgan Whalen, Casey Musgraves, and I really love Taylor Swift. My new one would be Lana Del Ray. Now, if I'm doing other stuff in the yard, like doing anything with an ax — cutting down stumps, cutting down wood — I'm listening to rowdy stuff. I'll listen to Black Sabbath or Insane Clown Posse. I feel like that's pretty fitting

whenever I'm using an ax, to be listening to the clowns.

When I'm doing Christmas lights, I'll really be feeling Christmas music. I'm one of those people that doesn't think it's ever too early to be listening to Christmas music. As soon as "Delilah" comes on, it's fair game to me. She comes on in October on 105.7 FM. But however rowdy I want to be that day controls what's going through the headphones.

I feel like it's always one of those things that can take away from the reality of how much whatever you're doing sucks. If you're trying to set yourself a new treadmill personal best, whether it's added distance or doing it faster, it's nice to be taken away. With music, it doesn't necessarily feel like you're there. Sometimes I'll feel like I'm in a movie, whenever I get my headphones in right. It takes me out of that physical moment and puts me somewhere else, and that's really crucial — especially when I'm up on a roof doing Christmas lights.

When I'm up on a roof, I don't like to think about steep it is. I'll get scared; get shaky. Whenever I'm listening to music, it kind of helps me move past how scary what I'm doing is. It takes me out of reality and makes everything easier to digest. It gives you a buffer.

Interview edited and condensed by Skyler Ashley. If you have a suggestion for Favorite Things, please email Skyler@Lansingcitypulse.com

Starlight Dinner Theatre's 'Lion' debuts two winters later

By DAVID WINKELSTERN

Linda Granger's dream of finishing Starlight Dinner Theatre's run of "The Lion in Winter" has been realized, despite taking 20 months and a new venue for the artistic director to make it happen. Those who missed the March 2020 Starlight production that was abruptly shutdown due to the pandemic will find the resurrected play inside a church, full of divine moments.

"Lion in Winter"

Starlight Dinner Theatre
Friday, Nov. 19, 6:30 p.m.
Saturday, Nov. 20, 1:30 p.m.
Lansing First Christian Church
1001 Chester Road, Lansing
Starlightdinnertheatre.com
(517) 243-6040

Instead of performing at the Waverly East Intermediate School that was Starlight's home for 15 years, "Lion" is being performed inside Lansing's First

Christian Church. This sanctuary is an ideal setting for the play about a royal Christmas gathering in 1183. A high ceiling with wood timbers suits Tom Ferris' set of three walls with stone facades.

The large carpeted floor-level space gives the cast lots of room to move about, and what a cast it is.

Original leads Kevin Burnham as King Henry II and Tanya Canada-Burnham as Queen Eleanor, give



Courtesy Photo
Kevin Burnham as King Henry II.

performances as regal as their character's stature. The duo exchanges the clever bickering of James' Goldman's script with a confidence and believability rare for any stage.

The English king and queen display myriad emotions and interact convincingly. The real-life husband and wife offer winning performances.

Robert McCleery, Malachi Cates and 2021 cast member, Caleb Tracy, play the selfish sons who scheme against their parents. As Richard, John and Geoffrey, the trio delivers distinctive images that suit the very different sons.

Emily Stokes commands her role as Alais, the French princess and mistress to Henry. Her credible acting earns our sympathy. Wyatt Wesley seems perfect as Alais' brother, King Philip of France. Wesley shifts from timid to severe with ease. Stokes and Wesley were

absent from Starlight's 2020 "Lion."

Original director Richard Redman remains. He keeps the play with lots of dated-yet-understandable English — and not much action — engaging while holding our curiosity. With no acting stumbles, it's clear Redman trained the cast well.

The majestic and appropriate costumes by Lee Helder give the cast even more authority and appeal. Abundant velvet and satins add elegance and medieval charm.

As witty and historically reasonable as the dialogue in "Lion" is, the 150-minute length becomes a bit tiresome — especially when sitting on thinly padded pews. But for a chance to see Starlight's updated "Lion," I'd even consider standing with the groundlings.

'Wendy and the Neckbeards' tells a modern cautionary tale

By MARY CUSACK

Friday morning, a Facebook friend shared that her child was in the ICU because they attempted suicide due to bullying. In a sad coincidence, that night I was scheduled to review MSU Theatre's production of "Wendy and the Neckbeards." The gravity of the themes

"Wendy and the Neckbeards"

Through Nov. 21
7:30 p.m. Tuesday -Thursday
8 p.m. Friday & Saturday
2 p.m. Saturday & Sunday
Arena Theatre
General admission, \$20;
seniors and faculty, \$18;
students \$10
1.800.WHARTON
whartoncenter.com

of this play will hit close to home for far too many people.

The story is about 17-year-old Wendy, a body-positive Internet in-

fluencer whose posts eventually attract the attention of neckbeards. A "neckbeard" is a misogynistic man-child who cloaks his insecurities with an inflated ego and arrogance. As the play illustrates, many internet trolls are neckbeards who lash out at women from behind the safety of their computer screens.

On the other side of the screen is Chad (Timothy Hackbarth), a personal trainer who has become insecure as he recovers from the death of his mother and realizes that he cannot support himself financially without his fiancé, Jess (Sam Campell). He gets sucked into neckbeard Reddit threads that prey upon his weaknesses and set him on a frightening collision course with Wendy.

The production values are simply stunning. Quinn Legge flips seamlessly from high-resolution TikTok videos and Twitter feeds to scenic backdrops. Paired with Nicklas Casella's mesmerizing lighting, the effects substantially increase the professional quality of the Arena Theatre.

Director Claire Wilcher cast the play perfectly, down to each of the Neckbeard chorus members, who represent several types of stereotypical trolls. Although they are vile creatures now, Bentley-Quinn gives glimpses of the damage done that set them on their paths. She also uses the character of Shih (Advait Rathi) to show how easy it can be to radicalize the insecure.

Although Chad is a fairly unsympathetic character, Hackbarth's natural

good looks and charisma feeds some innate desire to see his character be redeemed. This reflects the drama that unfolds daily on the news as seemingly good men give into their baser natures in these tumultuous times, make poor choices and end up on trial in courtrooms and in the court of public opinion.

The script is mostly clever and topical, veering into preachiness toward the end. Even when preachy, though, Bentley-Quinn is self-aware in that she admits to presenting a problem and offering no solutions. This is maddening but honest. It's too much to expect that one winter can solve the world's social media problem, but she can point out that the first step to solving a problem is admitting we have one.

New book demystifies life after the death of a spouse

By **BILL CASTANIER**

Two journalists with Michigan connections have written a book on widows that can be best characterized by their own words: “A playbook for those who believe love can strike more than once.” The new book, “Finding Love After Loss: A Relationship Roadmap for Widows,” by Detroit-area writer Marti Benedetti and Washington, D.C., freelancer Mary A. Dempsey, offers a step-by-step guide for reentering the dating scene and discusses the complex, unorthodox life decisions to be made after the loss of a spouse.

Both authors had experiences with widowhood and widowers. Benedetti was a longtime widower and Dempsey had been in a long-term relationship with a widower.

The authors, who met while working in Michigan, were introduced by former Lansing State Journal writer Judy Putnam. Benedetti was working in the Detroit area writing for Crain Business Detroit and Dempsey, an MSU journalism graduate, covered the legislature for United Press International. Later, despite their long-distance friendship, the two began talking in 2017 about doing a series of magazine articles on the topic of widows.

The co-authors interviewed 60 widows and compiled their findings about how the widows were pulling their lives together and how they were working through the bereavement.

“We gathered so much material, we decided to write a book,” Dempsey said in a phone interview with City Pulse.

The widows were from all over the country and were identified mostly through word of mouth.

“The first thing Marti noticed was just how many widows there are in the



Courtesy Photo

Dempsey

country,” Dempsey said.

To put that in perspective, in 2019 there were more than 1 million new widows. Census data shows one-third of all women in the U.S. have lost a partner and 700,000 women lose a partner each year — with that number climbing dramatically due to COVID-19 deaths.

Dempsey said what surprised her most was how young many widows were, with the average age in the mid-50s. Dempsey said she wished they would have interviewed younger widows.

“We always assume widows are much older,” she said.

Dempsey said the interviewees were promised confidentiality and spoke candidly about everything from sex, loneliness, finances and how the world around them reacts.

“We found that not all widowers found new partners,” she said. “Many



Courtesy Photo

Benedetti

had taken care of a dying spouse and did not want to go through that again.”

The authors also identified that widows, in general, have a sense of urgency to put their lives in order and many relish their independence.

It wasn't surprising to the authors that widows carry the grief of loss all their lives. In their book, they write: “Widows can carry two relationships — the one they always have with the deceased partner and the new one that unfolds with the different person they have become.”

The book also explores in more detail how the modern widow is reentering the dating scene by using one of the many online dating sites. In a chapter appropriately titled “Sex,” the authors delve into everything from physical intimacy to STDs and self-love (masturbation).

“I was especially surprised that — although widows know what they want

— just how careless they were about things like HIV and STDs,” Dempsey said. “When it came to dating divorcees, widows were pretty much in agreement that it was a non-starter for them. After being in a long-term relationship, the widows are judgmental about those who are divorced.”

Each chapter is short, to the point and concludes with a blog entry from Benedetti, which she began shortly after her husband's death in 2012. Dempsey said Marti's blog personalized the book and provided insight into widowhood.

The book also has cautionary tales about things that can go wrong for widows, such as being targeted for financial scamming both on and off line.

“During their grief, they are perfect targets for scammers,” Dempsey said. The book also prepares widows for the online world of cat-fishing, cyberstalking, ghosting and received unwanted “dick pics.” It also helps widows, their friends and their families understand and differentiate from the loss of a partner through divorce.

Importantly, the book demystifies the myth that being widowed and divorced are the same. In the book they write: “In many cases, divorce brings a person's worst nightmare to an end. When death touches a marriage, on the other hand, the worst nightmare may be just beginning.”

Dempsey said she has only one regret.

“Sadly, before the book was published, Marti died and did not live to see the final copy in print,” she said. “We had fun writing the book, and our friendship got deeper as we merged two voices into one.”

“Every leaf speaks bliss to me, Fluttering from the Autumn tree.”

- Emily Bronte

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THE TOP OF THE TOWN: A BACKSTAGE PASS WITH THIS YEAR'S WINNERS



The people, places and things that moved Greater Lansing in 2021

For Fourteen years running, the annual City Pulse-Fox News 47 Top of the Town awards contest has become more than a simple popularity competition. With almost 84,000 votes this year from more than 9,300 voters, its results also show-

case a region thriving with entrepreneurial spirit — illustrated through a vast array of people, places and things that, together, truly make Lansing an inspiring place to live and work.

We revealed the winners of this year's contest last week. And with so many fascinating stories buried in those results, it was only right to come

back with an encore — turning over as much ink as possible this week to whom our readers decided deserved a spot at the Top of the Town. We wish we had space for more!

Check out the full list of winners in this year's Top of the Town contest at lansingcitypulse.com. If the shoe fits ...

AMERICAN FIFTH SPIRITS



General Manager Jessica Mestemaker wasn't all too surprised to see American Fifth Spirits win for Lansing's best cocktails this year. She said those recipes — which vary by the season — are a

point of particular pride for her and her staff. It's all about giving Lansing something fresh.

And since American Fifth is also Lansing's top voted distillery, it really doesn't get much fresher.

"We strive to give Lansing what it's missing in the way of craft cocktails, and I think we're doing that," Mestemaker said. "We're always using fresh and fun ingredients that might not always be the easiest to find. They all have to look good, smell good and taste good. It's an experience."

American Fifth launched on Larch Street in the Stadium District in 2015. Mestemaker said everyone, from the back of the house to upper management, is involved in deciding which

cocktails hit the menu.

"Everyone has a hand, and then we sit on a small panel to say yea or nay," she said. "We have that meeting coming up soon. There actually aren't a lot of bad recipes that get pitched. Our pallets are pretty sophisticated; it's mostly just tweaking it to be a little sweeter or more savory."

The staff said the most popular cocktail — by a wide margin — is the "Unwind," which includes American Fifth's own cucumber basil vodka and ginger liqueur, along with some fresh lemon juice, house-made simple syrup, cucumber, basil and a splash or two of ginger beer. The "Old Fashioned 2.0" is another crowd favorite, which includes American Fifth's signature bourbon, de-

merara syrup, angostura bitters, coffee pecan bitters, deionized water, orange and a cherry.

Even those who don't drink may have found some extra appreciation for this distillery this year. The staff abruptly switched gears last March to start producing hand sanitizer amid the pandemic — donating some to local health-care institutions and selling some in the parking lot. And despite the tough times, Mestemaker said business is starting to make a resurgence again. Don't want to go out quite yet? Stay tuned next month for a variety of American Fifth gift packs — including packages of various syrups, spirits and at-home cocktail kits for friends and family.

— KYLE KAMINSKI

JENN CARPENTER

Since coming onto the scene with Demented Mitten Tours, Jenn Carpenter has built her own little media empire out of tirelessly exploring Michigan's most morbidly intriguing paranormal and true crime stories. Since building Demented Mitten into a popular attraction to guests from across the entire Midwest, she's authored several books, started the annual event A Festival of Oddities, opened a bookstore and created the podcast "So Dead." Festival of Oddities and "So Dead" brought home some Top of the Town gold, winning the Best Local Event and Best Podcast awards.

So Dead was launched by Carpenter and former cohost Dani Fairman in 2019. The concept was simple: take what Carpenter had already been doing with her books and the Demented Tours and turn into something audible. With true crime podcasts becoming all the rage, the timing was just right for So Dead to attract a dedicated following.

"So Dead," the podcast, is probably my favorite of all of my projects. It makes me happy to know that others love it as much as I do," Carpenter said.

A Festival of Oddities, which began at the Turner-Dodge House, moved to another historic Mid-Michigan site, the old Eaton County Courthouse in Char-

lotte. The festival gathers several hundred horror hounds thanks to a macabre lineup of vendors, author meet and greets and all sorts of attractions — including snake pits and monster exhibits.

"A Festival of Oddities winning Best Local Event is huge. This is only our third year on the scene, and two of those



Carpenter

years have been during COVID. I feel like we haven't even reached our full potential yet," Carpenter said.

Carpenter keeps herself busy throughout the week running her bookstore, Deadtime Stories, which opened this year in REO Town. The shop maintains a collection of true crime novels and other paranormal-themed goodies.

"Even though Deadtime Stories didn't take the top spot, this was the bookshop's first year to be included in Top of the Town. To make the top three in so many categories is awesome," Carpenter said.

— SKYLER ASHLEY

CONSTELLATION CAT CAFÉ

If City Pulse were a high school, then Constellation Cat Café owner Kelsey Maccombs would be our homecoming and prom queen — and maybe the star quarterback and valedictorian too.

Her coffee shop and feline playground on Lake Lansing Road in East Lansing won more awards than any other business in this year's Top of the Town contest, taking home the distinction of Greater Lansing's best coffee shop, best hangout for seniors, best hangout for students, best trivia night, best local Instagram account and the title of the region's most trustworthy business.

It also took second place for best solo hangout and best local attraction for kids. It seems this place has nearly uni-

versal appeal for all ages in Lansing — and even more so for cat lovers.

"It feels really good," Maccombs said. "It has been a terrible time to run a fledgling little business, so it's so nice to hear that people care about us. We're really just a small business that makes no money at all, so we're just living off our adoption numbers and compliments."

Constellation Cat Café opened in late 2019 and



in fewer than two years has already solidified itself as a Lansing staple. Maccombs attributes the recent popularity to a general love of cats, as well as a cast of regulars that have found a sense of comfort in a brief escape to the café.

"We're pretty open for everyone. We try to create that welcoming environment," Maccombs said.

The business model is simple: Half of the shop looks like a typical cafe and serves a variety of coffee drinks and milkshakes. The other side is a room filled with up to 20 cats, where customers can pay \$14 to spend an hour cuddling with kitties and sipping sugary beverages.

Maccombs' initial goal — and part of the whole reason she started the coffee-

house — was to take in 100 rescued foster cats annually in hopes that she could help each of them to find a new home. The 900th cat was adopted from the cafe last month, about 10 years ahead of schedule.

"Most of our cats are getting adopted within a week or two now," Maccombs said. "It's definitely not a new concept. These types of cafes have been around for years. I just took a gamble that it could work here, and it really means a lot that people seem to love us so much. I honestly cried when I saw we won most trustworthy. I just want to be honest and straightforward with people."

— KYLE KAMINSKI

Winners

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RON DELEON

Ron DeLeon should probably get something shinier than a printed certificate for winning as this year's best CATA bus driver. It's a title that he has earned every year since 2015, when the category was first added to the Top of the Town contest. Some type of trophy may be in order.

DeLeon, 56, who graduated from

Sexton High School in 1983, has worked for CATA — primarily driving routes near Michigan State University — for 23 years. He moonlights as a professional boxing and mixed martial arts promoter, but he said it's his bus driving job that he finds "inspiring."

"I blew my knee playing basketball, so I was looking for a job where I



DeLeon

didn't need to be on my feet," DeLeon said. "For me, I like dealing with the students. My route goes right through campus, and some of the students are so driven and goal-oriented. It's really inspiring."

DeLeon, a good friend of Lansing developer Joel Ferguson, has also helped organize the Great Brian and Christian Ferguson Tennis Memorial Challenge at Waverly High School for the last 16 years, which usually raises about \$1,000 annually to donate to the American Cancer Society.

City Pulse couldn't send out a reporter for a ridealong with DeLeon last weekend because he was taking

vacation time — to get married to a woman he met about 18 years ago while driving his usual route through MSU's campus. It was love at first sight.

He said his wife, then a student at MSU in 2003, tried to flirt with him in between bus stops.

"I look back and see this beauty, smiling and waving at me," he said. "We both laughed, introduced ourselves to each other and had many conversations on the bus the rest of the school year. Eighteen years later, here we are. To say she has my heart is an understatement."

— KYLE KAMINSKI

LOCAL ROOTS CANNABIS CO.

With more than two dozen dispensaries dotting the map of Greater Lansing, and many of them bankrolled by multi-million-dollar cannabis empires, this year's standout favorite for best provisioning center may seem unusual — especially for its backwoods locale in rural Laingsburg. But get to know the folks behind the curtain and it's not at all too surprising that our readers selected Local Roots Cannabis Co. by a landslide margin as the region's top pot shop.

Roy Liskey and his mother, Ronda Liskey, who have spent most of their lives in Laingsburg, decided to open a one-off retail location there in April. And as it turns out, the hometown



charm of a mom-and-pop (or mom-and-son) provisioning center is more appealing for some smokers than the Urban Outfitter vibes at some of the more modern local retail chains.

"I think there's a trend out there

where people like to shop local and eat local — and also smoke local. That's kind of our new slogan. We're trying to get people to pay attention to the brands they consume, and here at Local Roots, we really give precedence to the brands with Michigan roots," Roy Liskey explained. "A lot of the brands we carry are also run by former caregivers."

The Liskeys said most of their recent success can be attributed to loyal customers who live within a few miles of the shop. But plenty of Lansing residents have also made the trip — in part because the store offers some of the most affordable bud in Michigan as "home of the \$5 gram."

Local Roots also sponsored four

concerts (with big-name acts like Root Doctor and The Ragbirds) this summer at the McClintock Park amphitheater. The Liskeys plan to turn those festivities into an annual concert series — maybe someday with the ability to smoke on site.

"We really try to stay involved in this community. I've lived here for 40 years, and it's honestly a treat for us to be able to bring these fun things and big acts into town," Roy Liskey added.

Don't worry BigCanna: Local Roots has no plans to expand to a second location. The Liskeys are perfectly content with one location in Laingsburg. In fact, they both intend to retire there.

— KYLE KAMINSKI

HAWK ISLAND PARK

Epic snow tubing in winter, swimming in the summer, fishing all year round, big and little barbecues, family reunions and solitary bench sits, a strolling and biking path that circumnavigates a picturesque lake — my heart, eyes and lungs have been refreshed and delighted more times than I can count by the Utopian scene at Ingham County's Hawk Island Park, on Cavanaugh Road between Pennsylvania Avenue and Aurelius Road.

On any given day, people of seemingly every age, race, ethnicity and fitness level are enjoying this miraculous little lake and its myriad delights. The park's design gradually shades from more developed at the south end, with a boat launch, splash pad, mowed frolicking areas, picnic pavilions and volleyball courts, to the more rugged south end, where trail walkers routinely encounter herons, deer, turkeys and frogs. You can find relief here, fig-

uratively and literally, on sloping hills and rocky, forested twists and turns that add extra interest to the park and its meandering loop of trail.

Fishing docks are spaced all around the lake. There's a nifty boardwalk along roughly one-third the shoreline, and there are plenty of secluded spots to just sit and gaze at the foliage on the lake's central island. Improvements, like the new fishing docks and well-placed benches, are constantly being made, thanks largely to the county trails and parks millage.

At the heart of the park, a community-built playground rings with laughter, the dinks of a step-on xylophone and the squeaks of a never-empty swing set. Yes, I have stomped on the xylophone.

I have kayaked to the island and flushed out a heron. I have consumed many cups of coffee and cookies, on the commanding south bench, with its panoramic view of the entire lake. On winter walks, I have warmed my-



self at the wood fire where snow tubers take a break between runs. I have even been hooted at — and been pooped on — by an owl on the north end of the trail.

I have not braved the tubing hill or done the Hawk Island Triathlon, but

I cheer on those who do. I also salute the county mothers and fathers who had the vision to turn this old gravel pit into one of the area's most beautiful, well-loved and comforting spaces.

— LAWRENCE COSENTINO

LET IT ROT AND RODEO BOYS

Though Let it Rot and Rodeo Boys are distinctly different bands, they have one major element in common — they both work extremely hard. The shared winners of the Best Punk/Metal Band award have earned their recognition in an industry that grows tougher to break out in year after year. Nowadays, bands in genres such as punk and metal are expected to relentlessly promote on social media, play regular hometown gigs and, eventually, hit the road on rough-and-tumble tours that can shatter even the brightest of spirits.

Let it Rot maintains a relentless social media presence. Frontman Brandon Hartman knows how to work the Internet — a necessity in this era of the underground music scene. The group

has gotten its music featured on popular blogs and made it deep into local radio station Q 106's annual Homegrown Throwdown battle of the bands contest, ultimately finishing in second place. Hartman maintains a strong Facebook presence, having built a following of 2,000 on his personal account and amassed 5,500 on Let it Rot's official Facebook page.

The members of Rodeo Boys have



Hannay

spent the past few months living like road warriors, traveling up and down the Midwest playing dive bars, sweat box clubs and basements — all prototypical punk rock venues. The group's lead vocalist, rhythm guitarist and songwriter, Tiffany Hannay, prefers to keep busy when not touring.

"We've been doing some touring this year, along with recording our sopho-



Hartman

more album set to release in 2022," Hannay said. "We have another music video coming out this month for our other single off the album titled 'Feel the Same.' It features cowboys, horses, and pistols! It's probably my magnum opus."

While Hannay didn't predict The Rodeo Boys would receive the Best Punk/Metal Band award, she was more than happy to receive the surprising news. "I was really surprised that we won! I knew I'd get at least one vote from my mom, but I didn't realize people in Lansing cared as much as they do," Hannay said. "We have a lot of love for our Lansing pals and our home base here."

— SKYLER ASHLEY

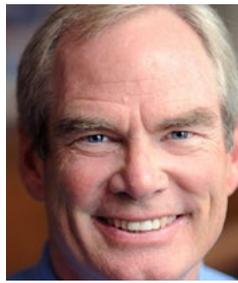
Winners

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MARTIN WAYMIRE

Roger Martin and David Waymire are planning to retire from this downtown Lansing firm and hand over the reins in January to Josh Hovey, Angela Minicuci and Andie Poole — but not before our readers could send them out on a high note as Lansing's best public relations firm.

Founded in 2004, the full-service firm has cemented itself as a Capital City staple with a long track record of effectively managing public relations, advocacy and issue campaigns for corporations and coalitions in industries and policy areas that include cannabis, health care, energy, technology, insurance, casino



Waymire

gaming, public education, transportation and more.

Hovey said the firm's sterling reputation for engaging the community with a direct focus on making Michigan a better place to live helps to put Martin Waymire a cut above the rest — evidenced by five Silver Anvil awards, often known as the Pulitzer prizes of the PR world.

And Hovey recognizes that as a new



Martin

co-owner, he'll have some big shoes to fill next year.

"Roger and David are kind of legends in the PR community. In a lot of ways, they'll be impossible shoes to fill. They have these huge personalities and have been working in and around policy issues and PR for more than 30 years. That knowledge and the relationships they've been able to build are just extraordinary" Hovey said. "I don't know if it will be as much about filling their shoes as it is about building on the legacy they're leaving in this community."

— KYLE KAMINSKI

OZAY MOORE

The top three recipients of the Best Hip-Hop award — winner Ozay Moore, second place recipient Michael Austin and runnerup James Gardin — reflect a strong Lansing rap scene that is rife with deep lyrics and soulful beats that are a loving throwback and evolution of some of the greatest acts from the '90s conscious hip-hop golden age, including A Tribe Called Quest, The Pharcyde, Digable Planets and De La Soul.

Moore is known across Lansing for much more than just producing his own music. He is also a musical educator and mentor with the All of the Above Hip-Hop Academy, a Lansing-based nonprofit founded by Moore where kids can learn life lessons and express themselves positively and creatively through the



Moore

fundamentals of hip-hop, such as rhyming, breakdancing and beat production. Both Gardin and Austin are colleagues of Moore, teaching their own classes at All of the Above. Moore also co-founded the Below the Stacks

art movement, which connected local artists and cultivated several stunning murals on buildings across different downtown neighborhoods.

"I'm so incredibly privileged to be mentioned among two of the most gifted emcees around. Furthermore, for them to be fellow All of the Above Crew is an honor," Moore said. "The capital city is brimming with phenomenal artists, I'm honestly humbled to be in the mix. Thank you 517 for showing me love. Be on the lookout for our All of the Above youth. They're coming for our spots, and one day will have them."

Austin, the second-place winner, has earned a name for himself with powerful live performances with his backing band The Soulcial Club. His most recent album, "Greenhouse," was released in 2020 and received high

marks from local music media.

"The Midwest has a sound of its own. I think about Detroit's Jay Dilla and who he was able to work with, whether it was Common or Erykah Badu. All these artists that come from this soulful era of hip-hop, like Questlove and The Roots, are my biggest influences. There was a time when that was all I was listening to," Austin told City Pulse in 2020.

Gardin was elated to be recognized by City Pulse voters, earning the runnerup spot beside Moore and Austin.

"I think it's dope to be recognized in my hometown. I've worked hard to be the best at what I do so the recognition is definitely encouraging," Gardin said. "It's also really cool seeing all the homies in the top three."

— SKYLER ASHLEY

JERRY NORRIS AND THE FLEDGE

If there's one thing that Jerry Norris accomplished since he launched The Fledge, on Lansing's east side, in 2015, it's to cause confusion about what exactly his outfit on Eureka Street does. Even those familiar with the organization always struggle to give it a distinct label, he said.

"We're an incubator, an ideation space — an accelerator, if you will, for people who want to make Lansing a stronger community," Norris explained. "We're still a community center too. It's a one-of-a-kind, radically inclusive ideation space, maker space, incubator and accelerator on a mission to create opportunities to pursue happiness. That's what the mission statement says."

At its core, The Fledge is an alterna-



Norris

tive sort of community center that provides a litany of services to just about anyone and everyone who needs them — including helping those struggling with substance abuse and distributing small grants to aspiring entrepreneurs. Its headquarters, a former church on Eureka Street, has also become a buzzing hive for young Capital City cre-

atives to host art shows and concerts. And Norris, 55, is the man behind it all.

Although this year's Top of the Town voters picked Gov. Gretchen Whitmer as Lansing's best activist/advocate, Norris was a close second-place finisher — a clear message from our readers that The Fledge, whatever it is, is serving its purpose.

"To be honest, I was surprised to see my name in there. I've never thought of myself as an activist — more as just a steward of the community, trying to make it healthier and better for everybody," Norris said. "I just try to stand up for people and stand up for the community."

Norris was also featured in the People Issue in January, then telling City Pulse that The Fledge was born from an idea to "eliminate poverty" and give back to the community that raised him.

Rather than start his own business, he said he found charitable work to have "more meaning."

When the pandemic struck, Eureka Street also warehoused food for anyone who needed it. Sewing machines and 3D printers were used to make masks. Norris also sprang into action to keep those suffering from substance abuse connected during one of the most isolating periods in modern history, loading up with Narcan and safe needles and converting studios to help connect people virtually to arraignment hearings, Refuge Recovery and Narcotics Anonymous.

So, surprise, Jerry: Whether you can see yourself as an activist/advocate or not, that's exactly the type of stuff that makes a great one. And Lansing thinks you're great at it too.

— KYLE KAMINSKI

LANSING ARTPATH

Public art has come a long way in greater Lansing since an infamous Old Town mural, with the guy playing a saxophone that looked like a giant banana, was finally painted over. Local and visiting artists are exploring a wide variety of subjects, forms and styles, from natural forms to graffiti-based and calligraphic designs, Calder-like slabs of color, portraits imbued with personality and emotion, and even a few bafflers, just to keep things interesting.

Old Town was given a breathtaking and iconic masterpiece of public art in 2019 when Albuquerque-based Nanibah Chacon painted a magnificent mural near the corner of Turner Street and Cesar Chavez Avenue, this year's runner-up in the Top of the Town "Public Art" category. But the

gold standard for keeping public art engaging, challenging, stimulating and comforting all at once is this year's winner, the Lansing Art Gallery's ArtPath.

ArtPath is an annual installation of 20 to 30 works of art along the River Trail from the Turner-Dodge Mansion north of Old Town through downtown and southeast to the Cedar Street overpass. Some are free-standing sculptures; others take on blank walls and underpasses.

The 2021 ArtPath brought striking and original images like Lansing artist Hector Acuna's "Life in Lansing," a cryptic maze of ladders, buildings and peering eyes, and "Sacred Sorrow," a moving sculpture by Haslett artist K.W. Bell, behind the Turner-Dodge House, reacting to the inexpressible sorrow of the COVID pandemic.



Most works are taken down after a season, but others, like the lush horizontal fantasias of Flint-based Isaiah

Lattimore under the I496 overpass, have gotten an extra year or two of life by sheer virtue of their quality and public fascination. Lansing artist Dave Such's wild eyeball on a stalk from 2019 is no longer glaring into the sky, but several standout works from 2020 are still going strong. Dayna Walton's "Pondscum," under the Cedar Street Bridge, is a hyper-magnified glimpse at squirming river life, featuring 12-foot-long dragonfly larvae. William Charland's all-text "Being and Autism," a vivid description of the world through the senses of an autistic man near the I-496 overpass, continues to rivet passersby who stop and pore over every word.

— LAWRENCE COSENTINO

Winners

from page 17

PABLO'S OLD TOWN MEXICAN RESTAURANT

Ask any longtime Lansing resident where to get great Mexican food, and chances are they'll direct you to Pablo's Old Town Mexican Restaurant. The local favorite eatery, founded by owner Pablo Maldonado in 2005, took home the prize for Best Mexican Restaurant (non-chain) and very nearly won Best Tacos, finishing second in a neck-and-neck contest with El Oasis.

Like many other major events in

Lansing's history, the foundation of Pablo's happened seemingly by chance. Maldonado arranged a meeting with a woman to purchase a mixer. He intended to simply make bread to sell with his friends, but upon learning that the woman was selling all the equipment needed to open a restaurant, as well as the building itself, Maldonado decided to go big. Just a short time later, Pablo's Old Town Mexican Restaurant was up and running.

Things are bound to get more interesting for Pablo's, which is opening a second location, on Michigan Avenue in Lansing's eastside neighborhood, near Strange Matter Coffee.

A second location planned for REO Town was eagerly anticipated for several years but never materialized. The



new location puts Pablo's right down the street from El Oasis, pitting two of Lansing's most revered restaurants

just a stone's throw away from each other.

— SKYLER ASHLEY

BEN RATHBUN AND THE RATHBUN AGENCY

Ben Rathbun is filling his dad's shoes.

"I'm literally wearing his shoes right now," said Rathbun, whom TOTT voters named best insurance agent. "I suppose I have quite literally stepped into his shoes." It helps they shared a shoe size. "The irony here is ridiculous."

Rathbun took over as president of the Rathbun Agency — named best insurance agency — this summer after his father, Paul Rathbun, died un-



Rathbun

expectedly. As anyone who knew or knew of the senior Rathbun, those are big shoes to fill. The list of community organizations Paul Rathbun helped lead over the years is

long, making him a prominent Lansing figure.

At 29, Ben Rathbun is building his own list. He's on the board of Ele's Place and the Lansing Art Gallery and just joined Rotary of Lansing, whose meetings his dad rarely missed.

Rathbun began helping out at the 65-year-old family business at age 7. He earned his real estate license at 21, as he was finishing up his finance degree at MSU on his way to an MBA in risk management insurance at Olivet College.

Fortunately for him, he and his dad did a lot of strategic planning togeth-

er to take the agency to the next level. Moreover, he has a highly supportive team, whose praise just helped it be named the second-best agency to work for in the Midwest by the Insurance Journal, a national publication.

Rathbun won't be matching his dad in one area: collecting musical instruments. The older Rathbun played guitar, a number of which lined the walls of his abode. The younger Rathbun loves music, too — but he plays piano.

— BERL SCHWARTZ

SKYMINT AND PURE OPTIONS

While several cannabis brands were highlighted in the results of this year's Top of the Town contest, the battle for Greater Lansing's dankest marijuana was one that was largely waged only by two local industry heavyweights: Skymint and Pure Options. Both companies are based in Lansing. And both were at each other's necks across several key cannabis categories this year.

Skymint took home awards for the best cultivation brand, best concentrates and best edibles — as well as the best hybrid and sativa strains on the local market with Gelato 33 and

Clementine. Its pot shop on Saginaw Street — one of four in Greater Lansing — also scored a second-place ranking for best provisioning center behind Local Roots. Skymint operates two massive indoor cultivation facilities in Greater Lansing that are licensed to grow up to 59,000 plants, as well as a 200-acre outdoor grow called Skymint Farms in Luther, which can grow up to 22,000 plants.

All told, the company employs nearly 300 people locally and 250 more across the company.

Pure Options was right behind Skymint in several categories, and the company took top prizes for best CBD store and best indica bud with a mind-numbing strain called Garlic



Breath. Jen Shallman, a budtender at its Frandor location, was also named as Lansing's best budtender.

Pure Options has about 350 employees in Lansing and also operates four local shops, as well as ones in Muskegon and Mount Pleasant. The company is also licensed to harvest about 20,000 plants at the old Pro Bowl building on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, with plans to open the state's largest clone breeding facility in Lansing this summer and expand into the Detroit and Grand Rapids retail markets over the next few years. Expect next year's contest to be just as competitive while both companies continue to compete for the local cannabis crown.

— KYLE KAMINSKI

SOCIAL SLOTH BAKERY & CAFÉ

Social Sloth Bakery & Café has been cooking up delicious Turkish goods since opening amid the all-time tumultuous year that was 2020. Despite launching in troubling times, the quaint eatery has amassed many fans thanks to its cozy, friendly atmosphere and its unique offerings inspired by the Turkish heritage of Burcay and Aybars Gunguler, the husband-and-wife duo behind Social Sloth.

"We've only been around one year, so this means people must like our food and enjoy being with us. Good food always puts you in a good mood, and we're very happy about the award," Burcay Gunguler said.

Coming up when in-person dining was a no-go and online ordering was all the rage, Social Sloth immediately had to develop some online savvy. The cute iconography of a fuzzy, and presumably very hungry, cartoon sloth was an easy bet to get some highly helpful shares



Burcay (left) and Aybars Gunguler

on social media platforms like Facebook. The bakery's involvement with social media campaigns organized by nonprofits in support of local restaurants, such as Downtown Lansing Inc.'s "#LiftUpLocal" movement, also assisted in building Social Sloth's growing brand recognition.

"When people come here, they're exploring something different. Most people don't know Turkish food and culture, they haven't tried the baked goods of Turkey or Turkish tea and coffee," Burcay Gunguler said. "During COVID, you couldn't travel. But you don't need a ticket to buy something here and try

something Turkish. When people come and try us, it makes us so happy."

Gunguler hopes people will continue to support the bakery and its neighboring downtown businesses in the coming months, when foot traffic is much lower thanks to Michigan's oh-so-lovely freezing climate.

"Downtown needs support, always. We are not the only business here — everybody is trying their best," Gunguler said.

If you haven't been to Social Sloth yet, Gunguler recommends you try out the éclairs and baklavas. But if you're not interested in baked goods, Social Sloth also has a wide range of lunch items on the menu.

"People say we have the best éclairs and baklavas they have eaten. We rotate the lunch menu every day, so there are always different things to enjoy," Gunguler said.

— SKYLER ASHLEY

See Winners, Page 19

Winners

from page 18

STOBER'S BAR

A decade ago, Tim O'Rourke might not have taken pleasure in owning Lansing's best dive bar. The name often comes along with images of a shabby, small, dimly lit hole-in-the-wall — a place with perpetually sticky bathroom floors, only three domestic beers on tap and a cash-only sign.

Nowadays, however, he views it as a term of endearment — a label for a beloved, no-frills watering hole with a cult following, inexpensive drinks and a warm and inviting atmosphere. And judging by the size of its week-end crowds, Lansing certainly doesn't mean the title as an insult.

"We are a dive bar, and that's not a bad thing," O'Rourke said. "It's just a combination of being a small, lo-



cal place with local people who own it and local people who come in. We have regular customers who mix with new people, so it's always vibrant. The

crowd changes by the hour."

Best Dive Bar is a category new to the Top of the Town contest this year, but Stober's Bar is not. Although O'Rourke and his three business partners have only owned the place for 15 years, its dive bar history dates back a century to 1921 — making it the oldest bar in Lansing.

It's also known for its enormous bar back that features a stained-glass inlay of a wizard flanked by three large Griffins made of hand-carved Haitian mahogany. The wooden masterpiece was shipped from California decades ago and reassembled at the bar by former owner Rudy Stober.

"As far as our success? I'd certainly like to say it's because we run it well," O'Rourke quipped. "But I have to admit, Rudy Stober was brilliant in terms of buying that bar back and having it shipped in from California. There's no doubt that helps make us the most unique bar in the city."

Stober's also ranked in second place this year for best happy hour. And while last week's print edition erroneously also gave them the award for best bar food, we're afraid we have to take it back. Pickled eggs and Slim Jims just can't compete with the real winner: MEAT Southern BBQ.

For those who are still hungry and looking for a nightcap: Next-door neighbor Moriarty's Pub also ranked as Lansing's best Irish restaurant this year, also taking awards for its jam night.

O'Rourke said he and his fellow co-owners were regular patrons of a dart league at Moriarty's before they teamed up to buy the next-door bar, describing its close proximity as creating more of a symbiotic partnership of a relationship than posing any real competition between the two.

— KYLE KAMINSKI

SUMMIT COMICS AND GAMES

Summit Comics and Games, originally dreamt up back in the '80s and opened in 2001 by Reggie and Regan Clem, is Lansing's fortress of comic books, roleplaying games, tabletop figurines and many other gifts that will make your inner-nerd blush. The store's longtime dedication to preserving the culture of Superman and Spider-Man in the capital city has earned it a loyal clientele and makes it a natural fit to take over the Best Comic Shop award in this year's Top of the Town Contest.

"It's always awesome to know that the community loves what we do as much as we love doing it," Regan Clem said. "The Lansing community is awesome and



supportive. We just love seeing the pop culture community thrive and allowing us to be a part of it."

The shop held tough through the pandemic and underwent a major expansion earlier this year. Summit Comics

and Games has since literally doubled in size, going from a store that operated out of a tight squeeze to a space that is much spacious. The expansion offers much more possibilities in terms of stocking more interesting merchandise, such as massive high-end statues of comic book icons like Batman, and hosting events like Magic the Gathering tournaments and group Dungeon & Dragons sessions.

"The expansion has been a resounding success. We have been able to expand product lines, add fun things like craft sodas, expand our vintage comics and make Summit just more comfortable to be in," Regan Clem said.

— SKYLER ASHLEY

TIESHA KING AND THRIFT WITCH

For being a witchy niche shop that's centered mostly on otherworldly items, Thrift Witch, in Lansing's Old Town, has grown into quite a popular retail fixture since its opening in 2018.

The spooky — yet fun — local retailer was labeled as the best consignment shop in Greater Lansing by the voters in this year's Top of the Town Contest. The store also came in second place for the city's best antique shop, best secondhand shop and best thrift store.

Walking into the shadowy shop, which is also the home of the locally sourced Dark Art Market, Thrift Witch patrons can browse vintage goods, new clothing, pop-culture collectibles, art and crafts, and "anything generally creepy," according to its owner, Tiesha



King

King.

"I have heard Thrift Witch described as Halloween in a time machine," King said. "It's really a witch's cauldron of oddities."

Thrift Witch is temporarily closed as

it prepares to move from REOTown to 108 E. Cesar Chavez Ave. Its Dark Art Market is right next door. The grand opening is set to run from noon to 7 p.m. Saturday (Nov. 20).

"This is our third space," King said. "It's just as beautiful as our old space. We are most excited that the Dark Art Market is on street level, too".

Thrift Witch was inspired by The Dark Art of Michigan, an art show series at The Avenue Café. After these popular events successfully spotlighted area artists, supporters urged King to open up a brick-and-mortar location — the dream job for someone like King who shoots photos of tombstones across the state on a fairly regular basis.

"Every item is special in its own way, but I would say most of our items have that witchy, goth, punk and pop-culture theme to them," she explained. "So

that's a pretty wide range of fun."

Beyond that, King had a lifetime to prepare for this gig. Growing up in Fort Wayne, she was raised on classic television shows like "The Munsters," "The Addams Family," "The Incredible Hulk" and "Bewitched" — just to name just a few.

"That set me up to fall for bands like The Misfits and Siouxsie and the Banshees," she recalled.

Like many others looking to host ticketed gatherings, King said she is proceeding with caution.

"We are slowly planning our yearly events at The Avenue, but at much smaller capacities," she said. "I'm hoping to find a space for an outdoor Dark Art Festival. My eyes are set on Old Town."

— RICH TUPIKA
See Winners, Page 20

The best looking plates from the Top of the Town winners

Each year, the Top of the Town contest highlights just how much delicious food Lansing restaurants have to offer. In every category there is a hard fought battle between the capital city's finest culinary wizards. We've gathered some choice plates from a handful of the winning contestants. Just try to avoid drooling all over this newspaper.



Ribs from MEAT Southern BBQ (top) and a burger from English Inn.

Shrimp from Soup Spoon Cafe (top) and donuts from Flour Child Bakery.

Pancakes from Good Truckin' Diner (top) and tacos from El Oasis.

Winners

from page 19

RALPHIE WILLIAMS AND KALYN WILDER-AIMAN

This year, the Best Bartender award featured a tie vote for the winner: Ralphie Williams from The Avenue Café and KaLyn Wilder-Aiman from Ozone's Brewhouse. I asked both how they got into bartending, what they dig about it and, of course, how it felt to receive high praise from the people of Lansing.

How did you get into bartending, and how did you get your job at Ozone's Brewhouse?

Wilder-Aiman: I started bartending by bar-backing probably five years ago at Buddies in Holt after serving for a couple of years. Ozone's was my favorite brewery. I became a mug club member in 2017 after I came in for the first time. The prior bar manager

eventually refused to serve me until I filled out an application — I had taken three of them home but wasn't serious about it. I've worked there since that night.

What is your favorite part about bartending?

Wilder-Aiman: My favorite part of the job is my regulars. I love seeing a smile on someone's face when I remember their drink orders and names. I've made some forever friendships because I started off just pouring these people's beers.

What is some important etiquette when ordering from a bartender?

Wilder-Aiman: Patrons should try to remember to take a moment to listen to the bartender. Most of us don't have a lot of extra time to say things that are unimportant. Most questions



Wilder-Aiman

I ask customers are essential to making sure I give the best service possible. Even if the only question I ask is, "How are you today," it helps me gauge the customers' moods. Also, just show the ID. Being carded isn't personal. It's important to make sure bartenders can continue to do their jobs.

How does it feel to win Best Bartender?

Wilder-Aiman: It feels very nice. I'm overwhelmed with the love and appreciation I've received from my customers and that's the best part.

How did you start bartending at The Avenue Café?

Williams: Five years back I was at a show with my partner at the time and they knew Thomas Peloquin, who worked at The Avenue Café. That was my first time really meeting Thomas, and they mentioned they needed a barback, so I went for it! I bar-backed for three years before becoming a bartender.

What do you love about bartending?

Williams: I think my favorite part is the interactions I get to have with the customers. I love making people smile and making them drinks they enjoy. Our patrons are my favorite part of the job.

How can people keep their bartender happy?

Williams: Be kind, respectful and tip well.

What's your reaction to winning Best Bartender?

Williams: I've been having a rough year, so seeing that I'm being recognized really made my heart happy. It feels good to get that type of validation. I'm happy to know that I've made so many people feel safe and important at The Avenue because that's all I want.

— SKYLER ASHLEY



Williams

Bored in Greater Lansing? Check out these 'best hangouts'

Top of the Town voters pick favorite entertainment destinations

By **KYLE KAMINSKI**

Of all the categories in the Top of the Town contest, there are none with more sheer variety than those places that were selected as this year's best hangouts. And last week, voters offered up a cornucopia of crowd favorites, fun for all ages — a little bit of everything, all of the time.

So, I spent the weekend visiting as many of Lansing's top-voted entertainment destinations as possible to compile the following guide to what our voters decided were at the Top of the Town:

First off: I'm allergic to cats, or I would've certainly made my first stop at the feline-friendly **Constellation Cat Café**, which by far received the most awards in this year's contest, including top spots for best coffee shop, best hangout for seniors and students and best trivia night.

Instead, I started off Saturday morning with a stop at **Fenner Nature Center**, which narrowly defeated Woldumar Nature Center for the title of "Best Nature Center" in Lansing this year.

I could've easily spent the rest of the afternoon wandering its 134 acres of publicly accessible green space — including its more than four miles of trails, rolling glacial eskers, towering maple groves and a diverse array of reptiles and amphibians inside the Visitor Center. But even for a brief stop, it was still the perfect spot to enjoy some coffee and take my dog for a morning stroll.

Fenner also recently announced plans to take over the adjacent Sycamore Creek Driving Range, only further expanding its footprint and the potential for outdoor recreation in Lansing.

Next stop was **Su Casa Smoke Shop**, which was voted as this year's "Best Smoke Shop."

I've picked up a few dazzling bowls and bubblers from this place over the last few years because they're always reasonably priced and the shelves are *always* stocked with a huge collection of wares. It's also locally owned and holds the title of the oldest head shop in town.

Lucas Peña is the third generation to run the shop. His grandparents met some resistance from a relatively conservative City Council when it first opened as a smoke shop in 1974. Custom jewelry was added to the

shelves years later. But in the back, it's still a stoner paradise with everything from vaporizers and grinders to roach clips and bongos — and everything in between.

With a long night ahead, my next stop was for an early afternoon pick-me-up at Lansing's top-rated **Biggy** location, 2002 W. Saginaw St., on the eastern edge of Lansing near MSU.

People must love this place mostly for its exceptionally friendly staff and convenient drive-thru location, because there isn't much space for hanging out. This is by far the tiniest Biggy location in Lansing, with space for only two tables — which can seat a maximum of four people. I grabbed a coffee, flipped through a copy of City Pulse and left before I could find a place to sit.

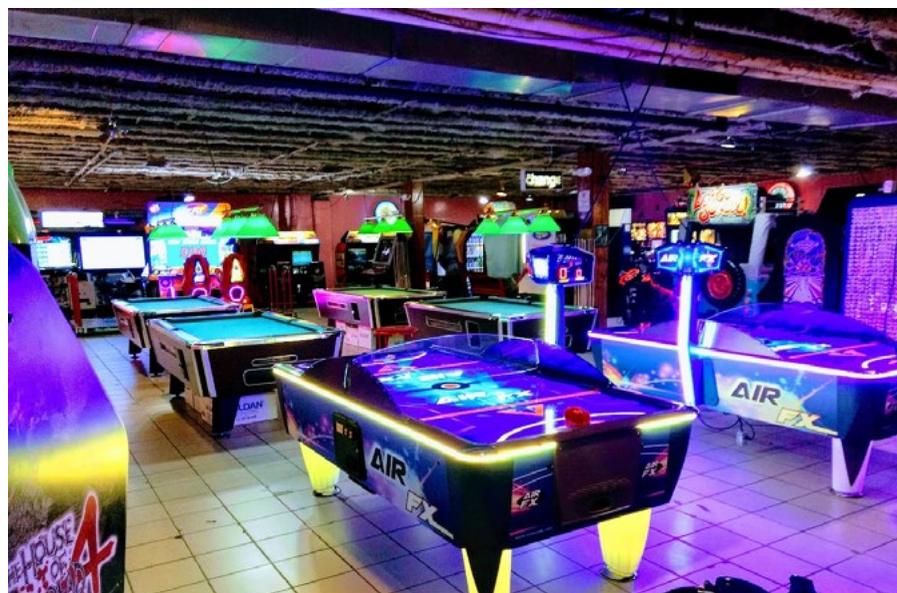
After lunch, I took a spin out to East Lansing to visit this year's top rated pinball destination, **Pinball Pete's**. This local institution also won out for the "Best Place to Play Video Games."

This basement arcade doesn't have many windows, so it's easy to lose track of time playing on the many pinball machines, old school arcade shooters and other games like Skee-Ball. And even though the prizes are gimmicky, there's something intoxicatingly nostalgic about the adrenaline rush that comes from watching several dozen tickets whirl out of a machine.

There's no booze at Pinball Pete's, so those looking for some buzzed gaming can also check out **The Grid Arcade & Bar** in Old Town, a close second-place finisher for "Best Video Games."

Playing a few hours of video games on only a few cups of coffee can be a bit dizzying, so my next stop was a quick jaunt over to **Horrocks Farm Market** for a late lunch. This expansive grocery store, pizzeria, gelato shop, bakery, deli and bar (and probably other things too) won the award for "Best Non-Bar or Restaurant Hangout," as well as for "Best Solo Hangout" in Lansing.

As usual, I was one of about 100 million people in Lansing who wanted to hang out at Horrocks on Saturday afternoon, so I tried to avoid the larger crowds in the grocery store and headed straight for its semi-outdoor beer garden to grab some food at Eato Chef, a local food truck with some otherworldly Pad Thai that usually



Courtesy

Pinball Pete's is an East Lansing classic, offering tons of fun arcade games with a cool neon vibe. The Grid Arcade & Bar in Old Town lets you enjoy classic video games and delicious drinks.

sets up shop out back Wednesday through Sunday.

Bonus: Voters also named Horrocks Farm Market as home of Lansing's "Best Patio" this year.

I closed out the night with my first-ever trip to **Spare Time Entertainment** near the Frandor Shopping Center, which was voted by a wide margin as this year's "Best Bowling Alley." A few pre-game pints of Zombie Dust from the attached bar made for a few poorly coordinated (but incredibly entertaining) rounds with my fiancée. I had time to play three games in one hour, which cost \$35, including shoe rental. And the place was so packed,

they also put me in their swanky Capitol Room — a room with a few lanes and comfier couches that are usually reserved for private events like birthday parties, class reunions, bridal showers and field trips.

Other favorite hangouts featured in this year's Top of the Town contest included the downtown Lansing branch of the Lansing Capital Area District Libraries, BAD Brewing Company in Mason, Uncle John's Cider Mill in St. Johns, Soldan Dog Park at Hawk Island Park, Breakout Escape Rooms, Hawk Hollow Golf Course and the Impression 5 Science Center in downtown Lansing.

Six dank recommendations from Lansing's best budtender

Pure Options carries many cannabis products in Frandor

(Jen Shallman, 25, of Lansing, has been a cannabis connoisseur since high school and has worked at Pure Options for about six months — originally at the old Stateside Wellness shop on Kalamazoo Street and now at Pure Options'



large new storefront near the Frandor Shopping Center. Shallman was declared Lansing's best budtender in this year's Top of the Town contest and since their favorite part of the job is helping customers find cannabis products, Managing Editor Kyle Kaminski handed them the reins to this week's Lansterdam in Review column.)

Redemption — Mafia Funeral

Price: \$35/3.5g

THC: 25.3%

This is my current favorite flower at Pure Options near the Frandor Shopping Center. A cross of Menthol and Garlic Grove, this flower is all about



Lansterdam in Review:

Pure Options
pureoptions.com

flavor. The buds are pungent, and flavor notes vary between the inhale and exhale. For only \$35 an eighth, I highly recommend this strain for a very even and relaxing high — while also still being able to keep productive.

Summit — Snowball

Price: \$50/3.5g

THC: 24.8%

Snowball:

This is a cross between White and Chem 4 OG. And these buds are LARGE. The high starts off feeling like a classic sativa and then moves into a more tingly body buzz. The flavor leans earthy with strong notes of mint and lemon. I'd definitely recommend it for



someone who has gotten bored with their regular rotation of strains and wants to try something new.

North Coast X Pure Options — Rainbow Belts

Price: \$40/2g Blunt

THC: Unknown

One of Pure Options most notable

strains, hand rolled into a two-gram hemp wrap with a glass tip. This strain gives off a very productive and uplifted high without that classic, sativa-induced anxiety. The fruity flavors of this strain are really highlighted by the blunt wrap being unflavored and tobacco free, a big plus for those who enjoy blunts but don't want a tobacco buzz or taste.

Wana — Pina Colada Gummies

Price: \$26/20 pieces

THC: 100 mg



Available in both Pina Colada and Peach Bellini, these are a bit different from the classic Wana edibles. Pieces are 5mg of THC as opposed to 10mg, which is a blessing for those like myself who are very sensitive to edibles. I found myself able to eat three or four of these over the course of an hour. Since the come-up is anywhere from five to 15 minutes, you can easily dose up without waiting another hour. The high is similar to that of a smoker's high — which is my preferred method of use for marijuana, similar to smoking. The high wears off within four hours.

Element — Live Resin Cartridge

Price: \$45/0.5g

THC: Unknown

Element has ruined every other cart for me. I'm loyal to live resin now. Don't be fooled by carts only being available in 0.5g, these guys LAST. Because live resin is full spectrum, you'll be getting a much fuller high than that of your basic distillate cart — so you won't need as many hits to reach your full high, which means your cart will last longer. These carts all have strain-specific terpenes, so they will taste just how the flower would. Because they are so flavorful, don't expect the vapor to be discreet. If you hit this cart in the bathroom at a family holiday party, some-



one will smell it. I've warned you. My current favorite: Orange Kush Mints.

Daze — Full Spectrum RSO Dart

Price: \$25/0.08g

THC: 72.2%



This product is great for recreational customers who want intense relief. Medical customers will more than likely be familiar with "Rick Simpson Oil," which was intended for those with cancer. New users should definitely start off with a VERY small dose. RSO is meant to be ingested or applied topically — not smoked. It's also made with every part of the plant, so it has a rich blend of cannabinoids that make it "full spectrum" and help with alleviating multiple ailments with one dose. It's best for those who can't smoke or vape but need relief from insomnia and pain.

Lansterdam in Review is normally written by Kyle Kaminski, City Pulse managing editor and a cannabis enthusiast who has been smoking marijuana just about every day for the last decade. Most weeks, Kaminski samples some of the best cannabis products available in Greater Lansing, gets real high and writes about them. Contact him at kyle@lansingcitypulse.com.

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We just re-elected a Mayor who did not tell us about Anthony Hulons death in the city jail for months.

A DeWitt police officer targeted, traumatized and threatened deadly force on a teenager while he was delivering newspapers. It happened in May.

The judge in the Rittenhouse trial suppressed video evidence of Kyle talking about shooting “looters” 2 weeks before he actually killed people.

Racism is only systemic because people prove they are ok with it by not speaking out against it.

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Jonesin' Crossword

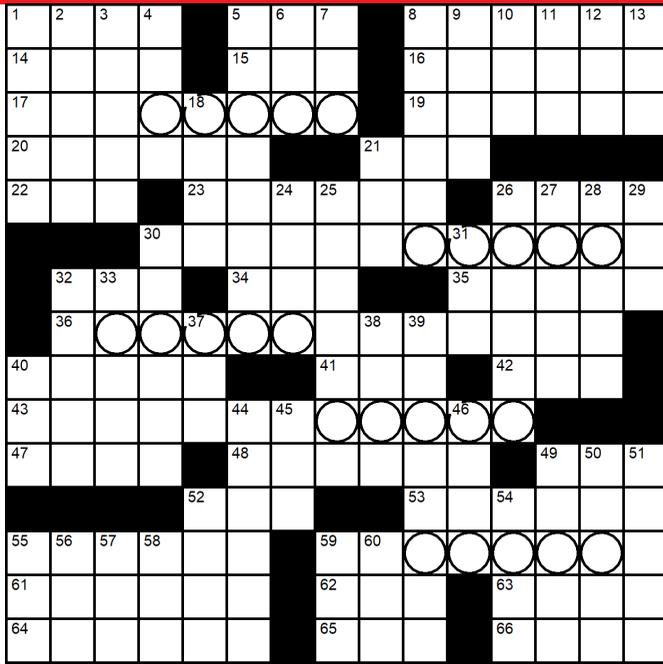
By Matt Jones

"On a One-Name Basis"—five for five.

by Matt Jones

Across

- 1 Light snack
- 5 Hoppy beverage, briefly
- 8 Library nook
- 14 "If ___ be so bold"
- 15 Snare
- 16 App where you'd better know your left from your right?
- 17 Comic-strip magician
- 19 Lunar module
- 20 Kool-Aid Man's catchphrase
- 21 Mini golf goal
- 22 Former Shanghai Sharks athlete Ming
- 23 Non-dairy dessert
- 26 More than a peck
- 30 Moral source of authority, in a way
- 32 "(Everything ___) ___ It For You" (Bryan Adams power ballad)
- 34 The end of school?
- 35 Chain that merged with AMC Theatres
- 36 Got progressively more confusing
- 40 When National Deaf History Month ends (it's actually a 34-day period)
- 41 Post ___ (afterward, in Latin)
- 42 Flight board fig.
- 43 Office drudge
- 47 Something ___ entirely
- 48 Exit the tub (but not literally, cause that's dangerous)
- 49 Wrestlemania location
- 52 Birthday candle material
- 53 "The Daily Show" or "Late Night Mash", e.g.



- 55 Some Netflix offerings
- 59 Battle site of 1066
- 61 Japanese crime syndicate
- 62 December 24 or 31
- 63 Yokel
- 64 Dodges
- 65 William Gaines's magazine
- 66 "The Book of Mormon" co-writer Parker
- Down**
- 1 "Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home" director
- 2 Nebraska city associated with steaks
- 3 Japanese electronics giant
- 4 Jekyll's bad half
- 5 Where travelers often stay
- 6 Three-time Women's PGA Championship winner
- 7 Teddy's Mount Rushmore neighbor
- 8 Repetitive-sounding spear-throwing tool
- 9 One whose spinning might be out of control?
- 10 Jake Tapper's employer
- 11 Perplexing
- 12 Two-finger gesture
- 13 Go off course
- 18 Tabula ___ (blank slate)
- 21 Casserole veggie
- 24 Boorish
- 25 Renew a skill
- 26 Danish cheese?
- 27 "That is," in Latin
- 28 Repaired rips
- 29 They're almost out of H.S.
- 30 "Forget it"
- 31 World Cup cheer
- 32 Drive forward
- 33 Fixes a sock
- 37 Roth of "Inglourious Basterds"
- 38 2.5 out of 5, say
- 39 Skied downhill
- 40 "The Great Grape ___ Show"
- 44 Some long-haired dogs, for short
- 45 "A ___ on thee!"
- 46 State, overseas
- 49 Like some matters
- 50 Present, as a case
- 51 Irascible
- 52 Navigation app that offers celebrity voices
- 54 Pinball no-no
- 55 OmbrÉ need
- 56 Toyota ___ 4 (SUV model)
- 57 "Wanted" initials
- 58 Dirty rain (or rainy dirt)?
- 59 Dress line
- 60 "Colin in Black and White" co-creator DuVernay

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Answers on page 28

Free Will Astrology

By Rob Breznsy

November 17-23, 2021

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Aries poet and philosopher Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843) had many ups and downs. He was one of Germany's greatest poets and philosophers, but he also endured more emotional distress than most people. His biographer wrote, "Sometimes this genius goes dark and sinks down into the bitter well of his heart, but mostly his apocalyptic star glitters wondrously." You may have been flirting with a milder version of a "bitter well of the heart," Aries. But I foresee that you will soon return to a phase when your star glitters wondrously—and without the "apocalyptic" tinge that Hölderlin harbored.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Author David Foster Wallace felt sad about how little of our mind's intense activity can be shared with others. So much of what goes on inside us seems impossible to express. Or if it is possible to express, few of our listeners are receptive to it or able to fully understand it. That's the bad news, Taurus. But here's the good news: In the coming weeks, I believe you will experience much less of this sad problem than usual. I'm guessing you'll be especially skilled at articulating your lush truth and will have an extra receptive audience for it.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): "I never resist temptation," declared playwright George Bernard Shaw. Why did he dare to utter such an outlandish statement? "Because I have found that things that are bad for me do not tempt me," he said. I propose that you aspire to embody his attitude during the next eight weeks, Gemini. Make it your aspiration to cultivate a state of mind wherein you will only be tempted to engage with influences that are healthy and educational and inspiring. You can do it! I know you can!

CANCER (June 21-July 22): While still a teenager, Cancerian cowboy Slim Pickens (1919-1983) competed in the rodeo, a sporting event in which brave athletes tangle with aggressive broncos and bulls. When America entered World War II, Pickens went to a recruiting office to sign up for the military. When asked about his profession, Pickens said "rodeo." The clerk misheard and instead wrote "radio." Pickens was assigned to work at an armed forces radio station in the American Midwest, where he spent the entire war. It was a safe and secure place for him to be. I foresee a lucky mistake like that in your near future, Cancerian. Maybe more than one lucky mistake. Be alert.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): To create your horoscope, I've borrowed ideas from four famous Leos. They all address your current astrological needs. First, here's Leo author P. L. Travers: "More and more I've become convinced that the great treasure to possess is the unknown." Second, here's Leo author Sue Monk Kidd: "There is no place so awake and alive as the edge of becoming." Third, Leo poet Philip Larkin: "Originality is being different from oneself, not others." Finally, Leo author Susan Cheever: "There is no such thing as expecting too much."

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): I encourage you to adopt the perspective expressed by spiritual author Ann Voskamp. She wrote, "I want to see beauty. In the ugly, in the sink, in the suffering, in the daily, the moments before I sleep." I understand that taking this assignment seriously could be a challenging exercise. Most of us are quick to spot flaws and awfulness, but few have been trained to be alert for elegance and splendor and wondrousness. Are you willing to try out this approach? Experiment with it. Treat it as an opportunity to reprogram your perceptual faculties. Three weeks from now, your eyes and ears could be attuned to marvels they had previously missed.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Libran educator and anthropologist Johnnetta Cole wrote, "The first sign of an educated person is that she asks more questions than she delivers answers." I agree and would also say this: A prime attribute of an intelligent, eager-to-learn person is that she asks more questions than she delivers answers.

I encourage you to be like that during the coming weeks, Libra. According to my astrological estimation, you are scheduled to boost your intelligence and raise your curiosity. An excellent way to meet your appointments with destiny will be to have fun dreaming up interesting questions.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): "Some people become so expert at reading between the lines they don't read the lines," wrote author Margaret Millar. That's not a common problem for you Scorpios. You are an expert at reading between the lines, but that doesn't cause you to miss the simple facts. Better than any other sign of the zodiac, you are skilled at seeing both secret and obvious things. Given the astrological omens that will be active for you during the rest of 2021, I suspect this skill of yours will be a virtual superpower. And even more than usual, the people in your life will benefit from your skill at naming the truth.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Storyteller and mythologist Michael Meade believes that each of us has an inner indigenous person—a part of our psyche that can love and learn from nature, that's inclined to revere and commune with the ancestors, that seeks holiness in the familiar delights of the earth. The coming weeks will be a favorable time for you to cultivate your relationship with your inner indigenous person. What other experiences might be available to you as you align your personal rhythms with the rhythms of the earth? What joys might emerge as you strive to connect on deeper levels with animals and plants and natural forces?

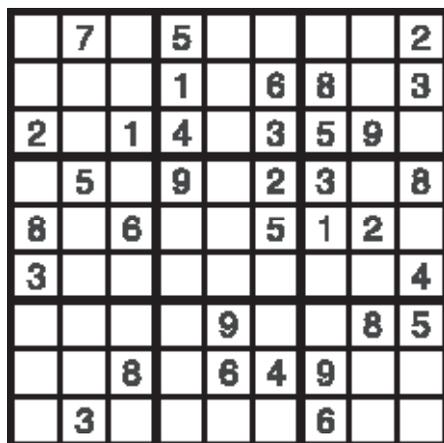
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Capricorn novelist Haruki Murakami writes, "I was always hungry for love. Just once, I wanted to know what it was like to get my fill of it—to be fed so much love I couldn't take any more. Just once." Most of us feel that longing, although few of us admit it. But I will urge you to place this desire in the front of your awareness during the next two weeks. I'll encourage you to treat your yearning for maximum love as a sacred strength, a virtue to nurture and be proud of. I'll even suggest you let people know that's what you want. Doing so may not result in a total satisfaction of the longing, but who knows? Maybe it will. If there will ever be a time when such fulfillment could occur, it will be soon.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): An article published in the journal "Scientific American" declared, "Most people don't know when to stop talking." Conversations between strangers and between friends typically go on too long. A mere two percent of all dialogs finish when both parties want them to. That's the bad news, Aquarius. The good news is that in the coming weeks, your sensitivity about this issue will be more acute than usual. As a result, your talk will be extra concise and effective—more persuasive, more interesting, and more influential. Take advantage of this subtle superpower! (Further info: tinyurl.com/WhenToStop)

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Since 1996, Ira Glass has produced the renowned radio series "This American Life". In 2013, as a reward for his excellence, he was offered a raise in his annual salary from \$170,000 to \$278,000. He accepted it for one year, but then asked that it be lowered to \$146,000. He described the large increase in pay as "unseemly." What?! I appreciate his modesty, but I disapprove. I'm always rooting for Pisceans like Ira Glass to embrace the fullness of their worth and to be aggressive about gathering all the rewards they're offered. So I'm inclined, especially right now, to urge you NOT to be like Glass. Please swoop up all the kudos, benefits, and blessings you deserve.

SUDOKU

Beginner



TO PLAY

Fill in the grid so that every row, column, and outlined 3-by-3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 exactly once. No guessing is required. The solution is unique.

Answers on page 28

TURN IT DOWN!

Loud dispatches from Lansing's music scene

BY RICH TUPICA

LIFE CHANGING ALBUMS: MONTE PRIDE ON

THE TALLEST MAN ON EARTH



Lansing-based folk singer-songwriter Monte Pride talks The Tallest Man on Earth. (photos by Shaina Mahler)

Lansing-based folkie talks up the 'Shallow Grave' LP

Monte Pride, a local singer-songwriter with two folk albums under his belt, is known for his rich tenor voice, lush arrangements, poetic lyrics and remarkable fingerpicking.

His second full-length album, "Even in Absence," was released in August 2020 — and he has another batch of songs brewing. Here, Pride talks about an album that inspired him from the very beginning of his career: 2008's "Shallow Grave" LP by The Tallest Man on Earth.

How old were you when you discovered The Tallest Man on Earth?

Monte Pride: I discovered "Shallow Grave" in 2010. I was 14 years old, a freshman in high school. One of my friends shared the album's first track, "I Won't Be Found," with me — knowing I was getting into Bob Dylan and other folk songwriters. I fell in love with the album and the rest of The Tallest Man on Earth's catalog right away.

What aspects of the album initially drew you in?

I've always been inspired by the album's lyrics and instrumentation. With all of the songs on the album being only his voice and a single guitar or banjo, it reminds me of

how powerful a stripped-down, simple performance can be, especially when driven by beautiful, abstract lyrics and technical guitar-work. "Shallow Grave" is a raw, warm, spare folk album.

Did the album directly affect your playing?

The album had a huge effect on my guitar playing. I quickly became obsessed and learned to play tons of his songs. At one point in late high school, I could play his entire catalog. "I Won't Be Found" was the first song I learned in his fingerpicking style. It taught me techniques that I still use and draw from in my playing today. It's also how I learned to fingerpick and sing at the same time. This album and his other music inspired me to begin writing my own songs and performing, too. I think that his songwriting style has influenced the way I write lyrics, as well.

Have you ever had the chance to meet The Tallest Man on Earth?

I've had the opportunity to meet Kristian Matsson (The Tallest Man on Earth) a few times after shows. He was always the kindest, sweetest, most generous guy.

The first time was in April 2019 at the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville. I

waited outside for a few hours after the show to meet him. I had written him a note, placed in a small box of fly-fishing flies. I learned he was a fly fisherman from his Instagram feed — it's something I've been into since I was a kid, so I thought it'd be a cool way to connect. I gave him the note and flies when he finally came out to meet the few folks left waiting. He was super excited and grateful for them. It was a really special, reassuring way to meet one of my musical "heroes."

What did the note say?

In the note, I mentioned that his music was a huge reason I got into performing and writing my own songs. I also let him know that his song "Criminals" was extra special to me; it was the first song I ever performed for a live audience.

A few months later, I attended one of his shows at the Royal Oak Music Theatre, arriving super early to get a spot in the front row. Mid-set, he performed "Criminals" for the first time in years. When he finished the song, he moved to the front of the stage, made eye contact with me and tossed me his thumb pick. After the show I waited to meet him again and he let me know he played the

song because he remembered me and the note I wrote him, and how that song had an impact on my life. It was such a thoughtful gesture to a young fan.

What's up with your own music?

I recently finished up my 2021 gig schedule with a special October performance at The Robin Theatre. I'm so grateful to have been part of the theater's first run of shows since they shut down during the pandemic. Lansing needs a listening room like The Robin, and I'm so glad that Dylan Rogers was able to keep things rolling after such a long year and a half.

I'm working to finish writing for my next album and plan to start recording demos this winter. I hope to shoot for a release in 2023. The new tunes I shared live this year have felt really good, so I'm looking forward to bringing them to life in the studio.

Monte Pride's Honorable Mentions:

Simon & Garfunkel, "Sounds of Silence"

John Prine, "John Prine"

Paul Simon, "The Paul Simon Songbook"

OUT on the TOWN

Events & Happenings in Lansing This Week

Events must be entered through the calendar at lansingcitypulse.com. Deadline is 5 p.m. Wednesdays for the following week's issue. Charges may apply for paid events to appear in print. If you need assistance, please call Suzi at (517) 999-6704.

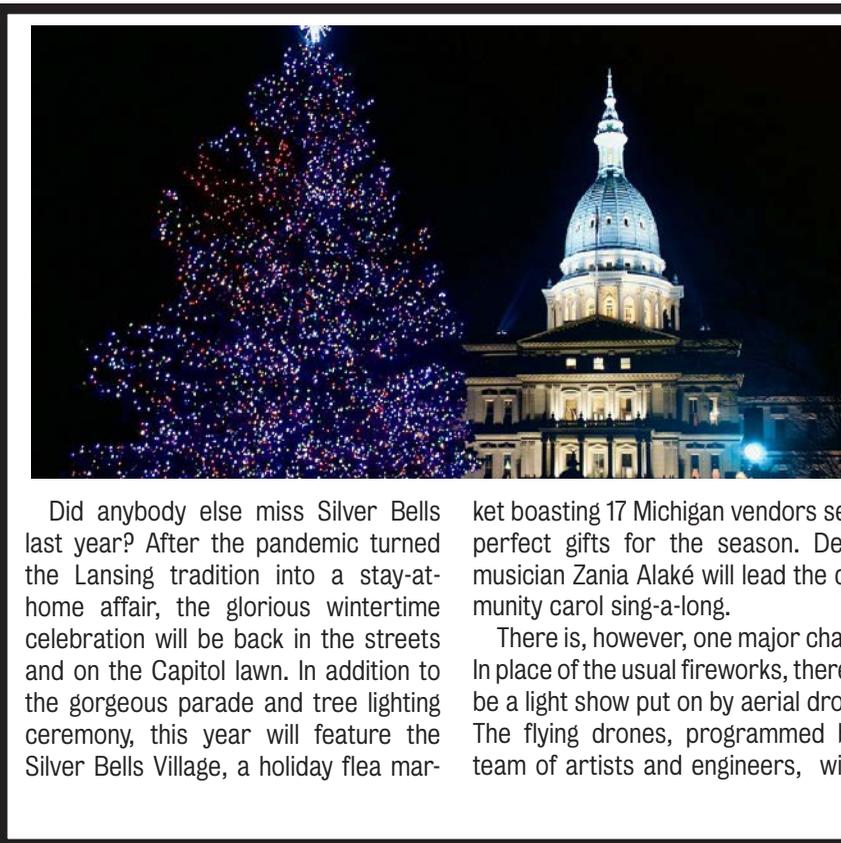
LIVE + LOCAL

Green Door
2005 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing
17th Annual Breaking Bread with the Blues Fundraiser
featuring **Gina Garner and the All Night Long Band, Johnny D. Band, Brown Arrow Blues Band and 3 Guineas and a Frog**
Sunday, Nov. 21, 4-8 p.m.

Lansing Brewing Co.
518 E. Shiawassee St., Lansing
Live Music - The Aimcriers
Saturday, Nov. 20, 7-9:30 p.m.

Urban Beat
1213 Turner St., Lansing
Absolute Music: Classical Music Series in Old Town Lansing
Thursday, Nov. 18, 2:30-7 p.m.

Robin Theatre
1104 S. Washington Ave., Lansing
STEAM Engine Poetry Slam
Wednesday, Nov. 17, 7-10 p.m.



theatre.msu.edu.

Silver Bells in the City

Friday, Nov. 19
5 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
MI Capitol Building
100 N. Capitol Ave., Lansing
silverbellsinthecity.com

Did anybody else miss Silver Bells last year? After the pandemic turned the Lansing tradition into a stay-at-home affair, the glorious wintertime celebration will be back in the streets and on the Capitol lawn. In addition to the gorgeous parade and tree lighting ceremony, this year will feature the Silver Bells Village, a holiday flea mar-

ket boasting 17 Michigan vendors selling perfect gifts for the season. Detroit musician Zania Alaké will lead the community carol sing-a-long. There is, however, one major change. In place of the usual fireworks, there will be a light show put on by aerial drones. The flying drones, programmed by a team of artists and engineers, will be

choreographed to music and will be visible from several miles away. Silver Bells is arranged by the Lansing Entertainment and Public Facilities Authority with sponsorship from the City of Lansing, the Board of Water & Light and City Pulse, among others. Fox News 47 will broadcast the parade starting at 6 p.m.

Auditorium, 542 Auditorium Rd, East Lansing. theatre.msu.edu.

Auditorium, 542 Auditorium Rd, East Lansing. theatre.msu.edu.

Wednesday, November 17
Allen Farmers Market - 3-6 p.m. 2100 E Michigan Avenue, Lansing.
Book on Every Bed - Children's Book Drive - Drop off 10 a.m.-9 p.m. through Dec. 13. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E Jefferson St, Grand Ledge. gladl.org
Diabetes Support Group - 6:30-7:30 p.m. Delta Twp. District Library, 5130 Davenport Dr, Lansing. 517-321-4014. dtdl.org
DMA Violin Recital: Geunyoung Kim - free. 8 p.m. College of Music Cook Recital Hall, 333 W. Circle Dr. East Lansing.
Downtown Spirit Week - Dress as your favorite superhero. League of enchantment will be at Summit Comics 4-7pm. Group photo 6pm.
Film Viewing & Discussion: "Older than America" - Come celebrate Indigenous Peoples Month! 4pm. lcc.edu for virtual link.
LAFCU Listen & Learn Being Thankful Virtual Reading Event - 7 p.m. LAFCU, 106 N. Marketplace Blvd., Lansing. LAFCU.com.
Steam Engine Poetry Slam - 7 p.m. The Robin Theatre, 1105 S Washington Ave, Lansing. therobintheatre.com.
Threads of Wisdom: Animals - Join us in-person or Zoom. 6:30-7:30 p.m. Weavers of the Web, 809 Center St., #7, Lansing. 517-657-5800. weaversoftheweb.org
Three from the Hearth: A Domestic "Dramady" - 7 p.m. Fairchild Theatre, 542 Auditorium Rd, East Lansing. 517-355-1855. events.msu.edu for info/pricing.
Wendy and the Neckbeards - A modern, dark comedy. 7:30 p.m. Arena Theatre at MSU Auditorium, 542 Auditorium Rd, East Lansing.

Thursday, November 18
36th Annual Dinner and Auction - hosted by the Tri-County Office on Aging and Jackson National Life. 6-8 p.m. Kellogg Center, 219 S. Harrison Rd., East Lansing. tcoa.org.
Downtown Spirit Week - Dress as your favorite Holiday Movie character. Group photo at the capitol 6 p.m.
Ladies Silver Blades Skating Club - 9:30-11:30 a.m. Suburban Ice, 2810 Hannah Blvd., East Lansing. ladiessilverblades.org.
Michigan Made | Holiday Art Exhibition - 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Lansing Art Gallery & Education Center, 119 N. Washington Sq., Lansing. 917-833-9963. lansingartgallery.org.
Perler Beads Crafting - Ages 6+ - free program! 6-7 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E Jefferson St. Register: gladl.org
REACH Virtual Meet-up: Arts Incubator for Young People - Zoom. 4-5 p.m. Reach Studio Art Center, 1804 S Washington Ave, Lansing. 517-999-3643. reachstudioart.org.
Stitch 'N Bitch - Bring your yarn or thread for an evening of fiber arts and chit-chat. 5-8 p.m. Keys To Manifestation, 809 Center St., #7, Lansing. 517-974-5540.
Studio (in) Conversation: Tom Berding - Instagram Live. 8-9 p.m. Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E Circle Dr, East Lansing. 517-884-4800. broadmuseum.msu.edu.
Vellum Thankfulness Luminaries - Create display for your Holiday celebrations. 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Eaton Rapids Area District Library, 220 S. Main St., Eaton Rapids. eradi.org.
Wendy and the Neckbeards - A modern, dark comedy. 7:30 p.m. Arena Theatre at MSU

Friday, November 19
Downtown Spirit Week - Glow Night/Silver Bells! Light up downtown Lansing by wearing glow lights and neon. 5-8 p.m.
Howl at the Moon - Guided walk through the woods. Dogs must be leashed. 7-8 p.m. Harris Nature Center, 3998 Van Atta Rd., Okemos. 517-349-3866. meridian.mi.us.
Jazz Octets with Carl Allen, drums - 6:30 p.m. MSU College of Music Murray Hall, East Lansing. Tickets/info: music.msu.edu.
MSU Community Club - 1-3 p.m. Zoom link at egr.msu.edu.
Reggie Harris, Alternative Holiday Sale Concert - 7:30-10 p.m. Edgewood United Church, 469 N Hagadorn Rd, East Lansing. tenpoundfiddle.org.
Silver Bells Holiday Live Radio Play - 8-9 p.m. The Fledge, 1300 Eureka St., Lansing.
Spartan Upcycle Fridays: Metallic Votive Candle Holders - 12-6 p.m. Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E Circle Dr, East Lansing. broadmuseum.msu.edu.
Take-Home Crafts @ GLADL - Instructions on gladl.org/curiousgladl. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E Jefferson St, Grand Ledge. gladl.org
TGIF Weekly Friday Dance - 7 p.m. Hawk Hollow Golf Banquet Center, 15101 Chandler Rd., Bath. 734-604-5095. tgifdance.com.
Under the Sea - 9:45 a.m. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-485-8116. impression5.org.
Wendy and the Neckbeards - A modern, dark comedy. 8 p.m. Arena Theatre at MSU

Saturday, November 20
27th Annual Wonderland of Lights - through Dec. 26. 5 p.m. Potter Park Zoo, 1301 S Pennsylvania Ave, Lansing. 517-483-4222. potterparkzoo.org
Artist Tour: Connections, New Beginnings - Join artist Scott Tompkins. 2-3 p.m. Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, 547 E Circle Dr, East Lansing. broadmuseum.msu.edu.
Ever After Opportunities First Annual Cinderella's Ball - 7-11 p.m. at Former Overdrive at Lansing Mall, 5330 W Saginaw, Lansing. 517-885-5646. Tickets at everafteropportunities.org.
Fireside Chat - Let's Talk Turkey! - Join the HNC naturalists for a fireside chat followed by marshmallow roasting and a guided walk. 7-8:30 p.m. Harris Nature Center, 3998 Van Atta Rd., Okemos. meridian.mi.us.
Game Night - come on out and share your love of gaming! 5-8 p.m. Keys To Manifestation, 809 Center St. #7, Lansing. 517-974-5540.
Jolly Holiday Market - Artists, baked goods, toys, woodworking, jewelry & more. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. REO Town Marketplace, 1027 S Washington. reotownmarketplace.com
Owl Nights - 7-8:30 p.m. Fenner Nature Center, 2020 E. Mount Hope Ave., Lansing. mynaturecenter.org.

Continued on Page 28

Events

from page 27

Paint Party at the Craft Show - 10 a.m.-12 p.m. Chief Okemos Sportsman's Club, 4667 N Gunnell Rd, Dimondale. 517-220-0058. paintyourpoison.com.

Toastmasters Meeting - Zoom. 9:30-11:45 a.m. MSUFCU, 4825 E Mt Hope Rd, East Lansing. 5799.toastmastersclubs.org.

Under the Sea - 9:45 a.m. Impression 5 Science Center, 200 Museum Dr, Lansing. 517-485-8116. impression5.org.

Wendy and the Neckbeards - A modern, dark comedy. 2 p.m. Arena Theatre at MSU Auditorium, 542 Auditorium Rd, East Lansing. theatre.msu.edu.

Sunday, November 21

Holiday Art Fair - featuring several local artists. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Art Unlimited, 4692 Okemos Rd, Okemos. 517-349-8278.

Jolly Holiday Market - Artists, baked goods, toys, woodworking, jewelry & more. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. REO Town Marketplace, 1027 S Washington. reotownmarketplace.com

November Trail Talk - Hit the trail with a naturalist for a guided walk. 1-2 p.m. Harris

Nature Center, 3998 Van Atta Rd., Okemos. 517-349-3866. meridian.mi.us.

Owl Nights - 7-8:30 p.m. Fenner Nature Center, 2020 E. Mount Hope Ave., Lansing. mynaturecenter.org.

Wendy and the Neckbeards - A modern, dark comedy. 2 p.m. Arena Theatre at MSU Auditorium, 542 Auditorium Rd, East Lansing. theatre.msu.edu.

Woldumar Folk and Bluegrass Jam - 2-5 p.m. Woldumar Nature Center, 5739 Old Lansing Road, Lansing. 517-322-0030.

Monday, November 22

Comedy Night - 9-11:30 p.m. Crunchy's, 254 W Grand River Ave, East Lansing. 517-351-2506. crunchyseastlansing.com.

Mr. M's Pizza Party - Grades K-3. 1-2 p.m. Join us at Mr. M's Pizza & Grinders, 101 W. Knight St., Eaton Rapids. eradl.org.

Tuesday, November 23

Board Game Meet Up - Ages 18 & up. 6:30 - 10:30 p.m. Spare Time Bowling Alley, 3101 E Grand River, Lansing.

Family Storytime - for 1-6 year olds. 11-11:30 a.m. Grand Ledge Area District Library, 131 E Jefferson St.

Sporcle Live! Trivia - 7:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. Crunchy's, 254 W Grand River Ave, East Lansing. crunchyseastlansing.com.

SUDOKU SOLUTION

From Pg. 25

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CROSSWORD SOLUTION

From Pg. 25

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Silver Bells

in the city

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Ingham County Animal Shelter

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515 Lansing St.



Waffles is a sweet, shy rottie mix who is crate trained, loves to go on hikes and is not a fan of cats. Older teens/adults home preferred.

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Rosie Madder is a bouncy girl who loves snuggling. She would like a few kids or another playful dog to hang with and chase around.

Sponsored by
City Pulse



Bill Denbrough is a sweet, friendly guy who enjoys attention. He would be fine in a quieter home with other easygoing animals.

Sponsored by
Schuler Books



Dijon is friendly, sweet girl who loves attention and a good ear scratch. She should be fine with cat savvy kids and other animals.

In memory of Rodica's cats

FOOD & DRINK

DINING OUT IN GREATER LANSING

Japanese Pumpkin Pie

By **ARI LeVAUX**

Kabocha, also known as the Japanese pumpkin, is a versatile and delicious winter squash. The flavor is starchy and sweet, with a firm body that can handle being cooked many ways, from tempura-fried to roasted to steamed to sweet purees. The seeds are plump. The hard skin is edible. The squash experience is complete.

Once upon a time, there was just one kind of kabocha squash. It was dark green, medium-sized and roundish. Nowadays there are myriad varieties of kabocha, including the bright orange sunshine, the striped green cha-cha, the ruddy black forest and, my favorite, the pale grey winter sweet.

According to the Johnny's seed catalog, "Winter Sweet delivers a winning combination of sweetness, flaky texture, and depth of flavor that has made it a favorite on our research farm. Not only that, this reliable producer keeps very well and improves with storage."

We have a farm stand in front of our house, maintained by my kids and supplied by a grumpy farmer south of town. He grew most of the above kabocha varieties I just named, plus butternut, delicata and other winter squash varieties. As I have cooked my way through the squash inventory, I have proven and reproved again that pie is the highest form of winter squash eatery. It's the one form of squash of which nobody gets sick. And there is an infinite universe of possibility inside every squash pie.

I don't use any of the pie spices except nutmeg, so its piney, resin-y flavor can stand alone against the squash pie flavors.

I tend to enhance my squash pies with chocolate, which goes so perfectly with squash pie. And the other day, when I was feeling particularly indulgent, I decided to bake a chocolate chip squash pie with a pecan pie on top, the two layers separated from one another by a layer of chocolate. It was as decadent as one might expect. A pie-opening moment, to say the least.

Basic kabocha pie

This is my kabocha pie recipe, including two variations: chocolate chip and pecan pie-flavored kabocha pies.



Serves six
 2 cups cooked (baked or steamed) winter sweet or similar kabocha squash
 1 tablespoon vanilla
 2 eggs
 Pinch or two of nutmeg, preferably freshly ground
 2 tablespoons sugar
 1 cup heavy cream
 1 cup milk or half & half
 1 unbaked 9-inch pie crust

Preheat oven to 350. Make sure the cooked kabocha is free of seeds, skin, string and any other impurities. Add the squash to a blender, followed by the milk, cream, vanilla, sugar, nutmeg and eggs, and blend until smooth. Pour the filling into a crust and bake for about 45 minutes. When it puffs up like a soufflé, remove it from the oven and let it cool on the counter, where it will solidify.

Chocolate chip kabocha pie

Add six tablespoons of semisweet chocolate chips to the ingredient list above.

After blending the pie filling, transfer it to a mixing bowl and add four tablespoons of chocolate chips, gently stirring them in with a spoon. Add this chocolate chip filling to the crust. Smooth it out and then scatter the final two tablespoons of chocolate chips on top. Bake at 350 as above.

Chocolate pecan kabocha pie

1 chocolate chip kabocha pie, ready for baking
 2/3 cup corn syrup
 3 tablespoons butter
 1/2 tablespoon vanilla extract
 1 additional egg
 1 cup pecan halves

In a mixing bowl, combine the corn syrup, butter, vanilla, egg and pecans. Carefully pour it over the kabocha pie, so it forms a second layer. Push the pecans around to make them even. Bake for about an hour at 350. It will puff up as it bakes, but will condense on the counter.



Ari LeVaux

Japanese-style pies cooked by Ari LeVaux.

Appetizers

WANT YOUR RESTAURANT LISTED? CALL 517-999-5064



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SPONSORED CONTENT

Top of the Town voters pick best new restuarants

By SKYLER ASHLEY

In the spirit of this special issue's celebration of the Top of the Town victors, this New in Town column will look at the top three vote-getters for this year's Best New Restaurant award. These restaurants have all begun to make their mark in Greater Lansing.

Winner: One North Kitchen & Bar

One North Kitchen and Bar opened in late December 2020, taking over the former Reno's West location. It has impressed local foodies with its pub-style food and large selection of cocktails.

The restaurant maintains a casual sports bar theme and serves a wide variety of burgers and pizza, as well as classic pub dishes like fish and chips. It's a great place to catch a Spartans game or watch the Detroit Lions continue to embarrass themselves. But most of all, if you're looking to sip on craft beer, One North stocks plenty of the best Michigan-produced brews



Courtesy

A grilled chicken sandwich with shrimp from One North.

available.

Second Place: Good Truckin' Food

Good Truckin' Diner has already secured its place as a hotspot for breakfast and brunch in Lansing. The restaurant has since expanded with a new location that offers products you can take home and prepare yourself. These include take-and-bake pizzas, doughnuts and all sorts of cooking ingredients, condiments and vegetables sourced from Michigan-based companies.

Detroit Frankie's Pizza was a partner at this new location, but has backed out. With or without Detroit Frankie's, the new Good Truckin' operation received high-marks from City Pulse food critics Bryan Beverly and Gabrielle Lawrence, who praised the unique concept.

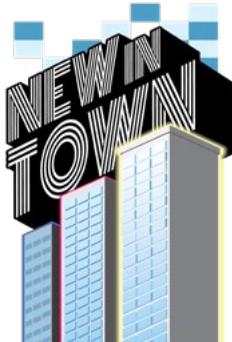
"Good Truckin' brought the yum early and often. The Pumpkin Pancakes were fluffy with a nostalgic pumpkin flavor, like a taste of fall in all the best ways," Beverly wrote in his review for City Pulse.

Runner Up: Babe's Corner

Babe's Corner is quickly becoming a favorite thanks to its gourmet sandwiches and its rotating menu of delicious soft serve ice cream creations that are getting increasingly elaborate. Looking for ice cream that's loaded with cheesecake, or how about a soft serve sundae that tastes just like a fire-roasted s'more? Babe's has you covered both ways.

The restaurant was opened up by Aharon Hebert and Will Green, the same owners of Bango's Food Truck, which now sits parked outside of Babe's Corner when it's not on the go.

If you're looking for a cute spot to have a lunch date, Babe's will likely satisfy.



One North Kitchen & Bar

Monday-Thursday, Sunday, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.
Friday-Saturday, 11 a.m. to midnight
5001 W. Saginaw Hwy., Lansing
(517) 901-5001
onenorthdining.com

Good Truckin' Diner Market

3515 S. Pennsylvania Ave., Lansing
Tuesday-Thursday, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Friday-Saturday, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.
facebook.com/Goodtruckinfood

Babe's Corner

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